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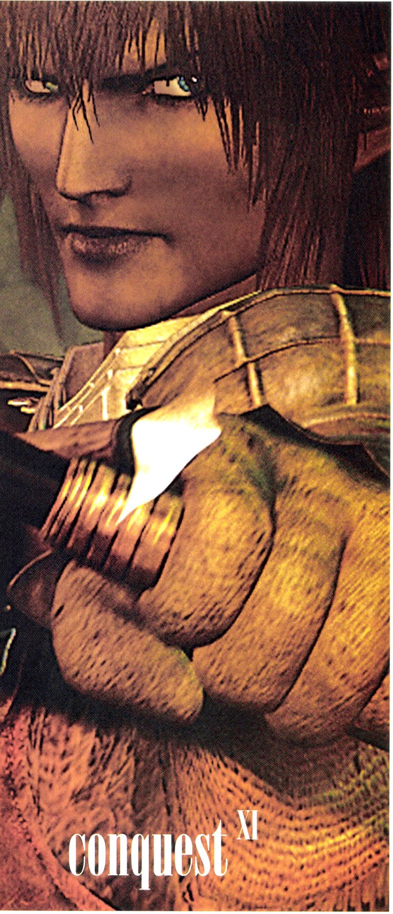

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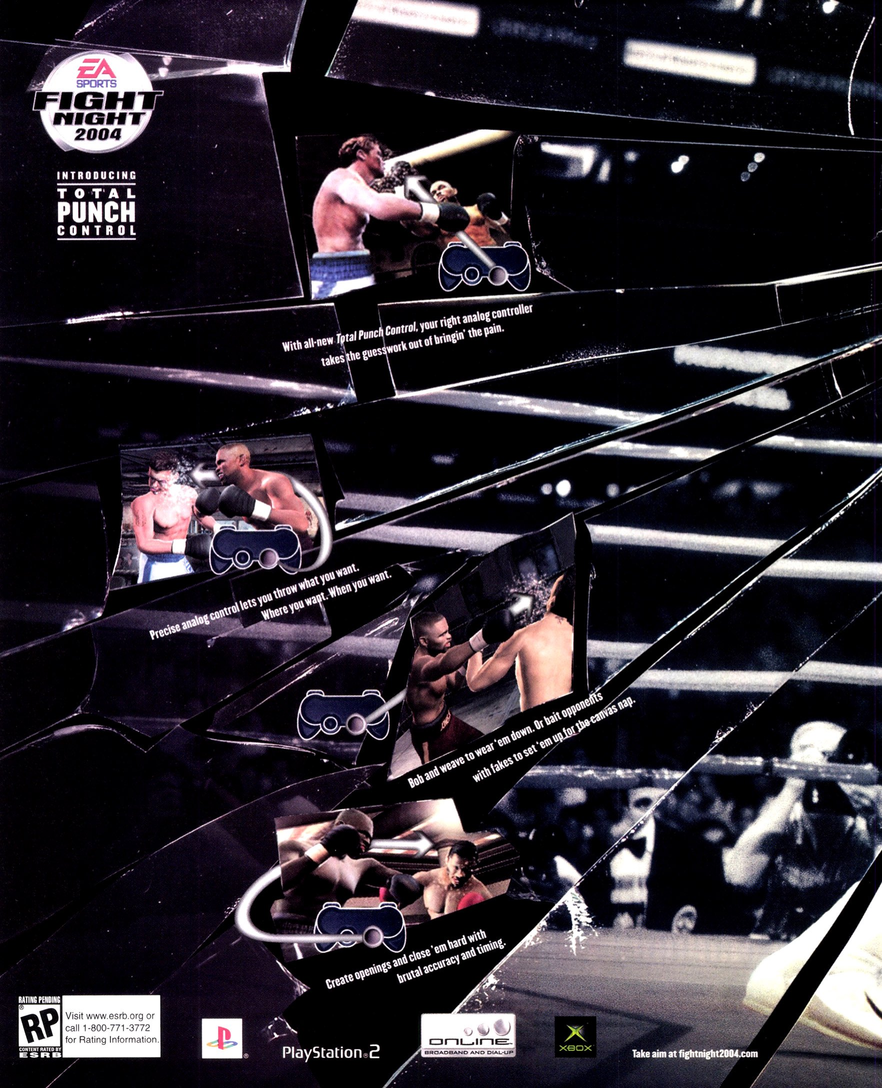
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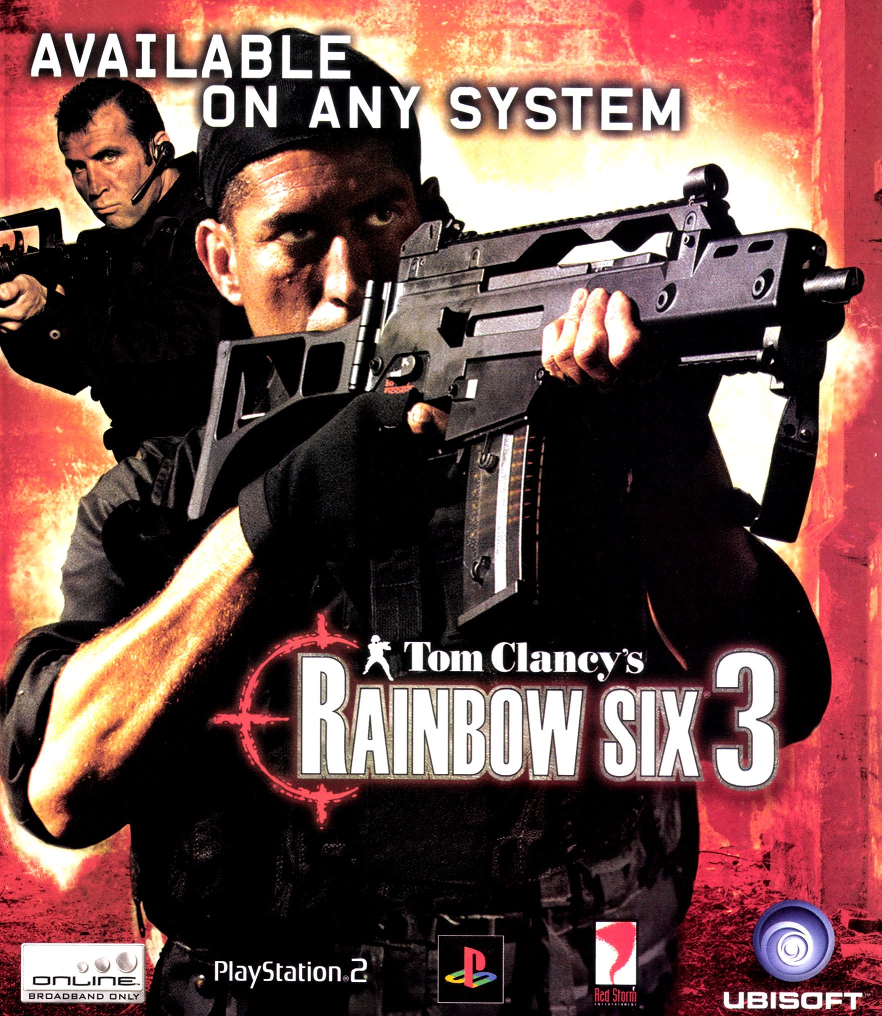
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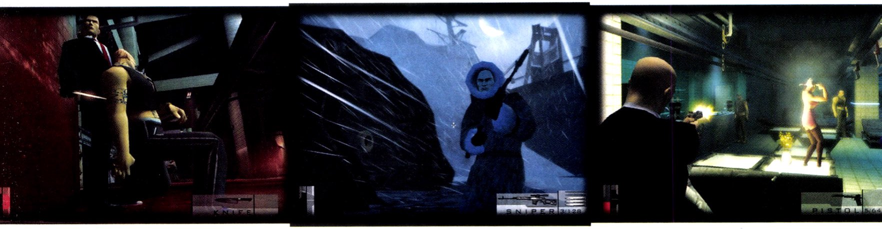

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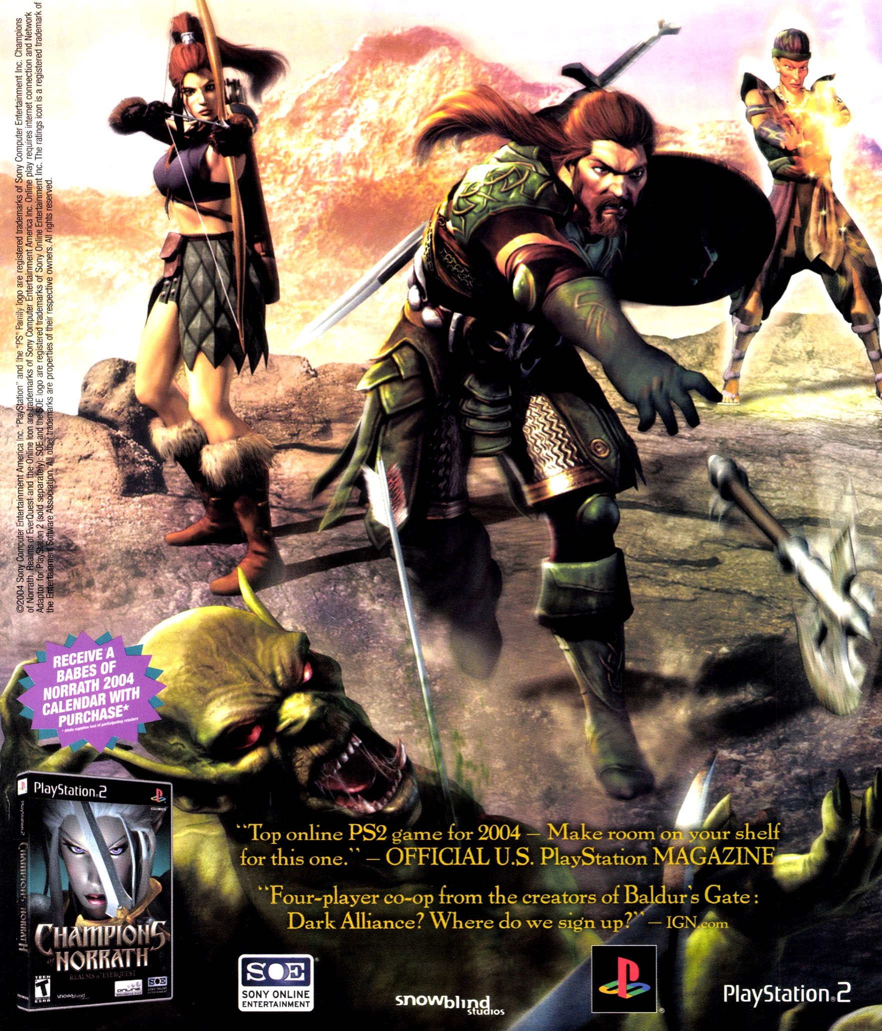
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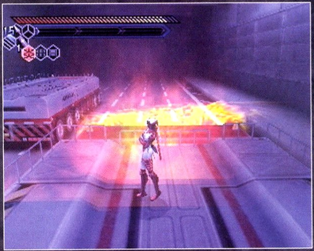
Shenobi. Get it? *She*-nobi! 'Cause she's a *girl*.

OVERHEARD
"A fierce wild beast: If he comes, his prey will be humans."
–Zheng Tai, describing Dong Zhuo in the novel *Three Kingdoms*.



NIGHTSHADE

Shinobi's better half

Publisher: Sega
Developer: Sega Wow
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Mature

If Hibana (the female lead in *Nightshade*) were to meet Hotsuma (the sickly looking ninja from *Shinobi*) on the street, she would no doubt say, "Anything you can do, I can do better." And she'd be right. *Nightshade* essentially takes all of *Shinobi*'s weak points and refines them to craft a better ninja-action extravaganza.

For example, the high difficulty level that plagued *Shinobi* isn't quite as noticeable in *Nightshade*. Of course, since both games have nearly identical gameplay, the perceived lower difficulty is much more obvious to anyone who's played *Shinobi*, but newcomers shouldn't have any problems completing the first few levels with relative ease while learning how to use the silky-smooth controls.

Still, *Nightshade* presents a heck of a challenge—one that forces you to use just about every ninja skill in Hibana's diverse arsenal to make life easier. You can either chop away at a boss character's life by using standard attacks or go for a one-hit kill. In addition, by killing at least four enemies in rapid succession (which results in a "tate"), Hibana can charge a meter that lets her unleash an even more powerful attack. So it pays to make some fancy-pants kills.

That's all somewhat familiar territory for *Shinobi* fans, but one thing that will surprise even them is the level design. Several of the levels in *Nightshade* are not only larger, but also much more creative. You go from fighting on top of a stealth aircraft, speeding past the skyline of a city, to the freeways of Tokyo, complete with massive exploding trucks. But as fun as these levels are, *Nightshade* also has its fill of rather boring moments. Most of these levels take place indoors and really don't have much to them, like the Shinjuku station area or the subway, which both are a little sparse in the color and detail department.

In fact, with the exception of Hibana and the bosses, all the characters are blocky and horrid looking, and again, some of the environments are in serious need of more than just a few of the same boxes, cars, or vending machines to decorate the landscape.

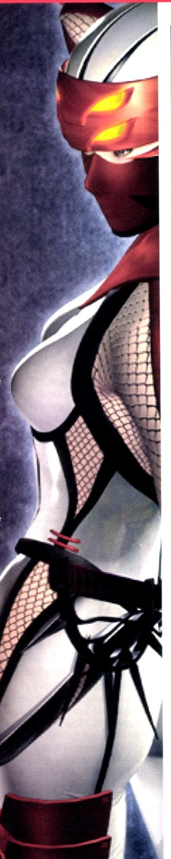
But good graphics were never the selling point for *Shinobi*, and they aren't for *Nightshade*, either. It's all about intense, well-executed ninja action, and you get plenty of that.

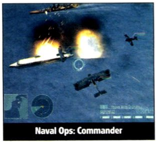
There are a few extras to increase your motivation to play through the entire game, including extra VR-style missions as well as concept art.

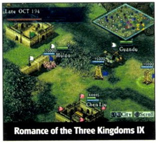
It's a solid game that any action fan will get a kick out of. Or if you liked *Shinobi* but hated the controller-throwing difficulty of it, then you'll flip over Sega's latest ninja adventure.

Giancarlo Varanini

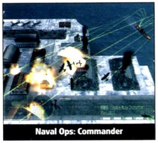
★★★½




Naval Ops: Commander



Romance of the Three Kingdoms IX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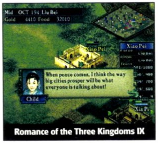


When peace comes, I think the way big cities prosper will be what everyone is talking about!

Romance of the Three Kingdoms IX

NAVAL OPS: COMMANDER

Publisher: Koei
Developer: Micro Cabin
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen

It's that time again, time for another Koei game I don't actually like but can tell is complex and deep enough that someone else will. Frankly, though, I'm tired of giving these games the benefit of the doubt—I'm scorin' *Naval Ops: Commander* for me. It's dull to look at, and, due to a lapse back into the more tactical, strategic gameplay that categorizes all of Koei's other war games, it's also fairly dull to play.

The new camera placement, different from the one in *Naval Ops: Warship Gunner*, allows a better view of the three other ships in the formation you now control. It also gives you a pretty good view of a lot of gray boats moving across gray water. It's as gray a sub game as *Hunt for Red October*, and that was on the original Game Boy. I don't think I ask too much of the graphics in my games, but it would be nice to be able to stay awake while staring at them.

Manipulating a whole formation at once has taken away a lot of the direct-engagement feel I liked about *Warship Gunner*, but if you like the strategic pace of this sort of thing, then you'll enjoy this. I wonder, though: Is it too much to ask for a sub game to just be *fun*—or at least possible to play without committing the entire manual to memory? When Micro Cabin meets me halfway by putting in an "a-WHOO-ga" button, I'll consider trying another *Naval Ops* game, but until then, it's back to *Underwater Unit* for me.

Nich Maragos

★★½

ROMANCE OF THE THREE KINGDOMS IX

Publisher: Koei
Developer: Koei
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

Didn't I review this game seven months ago? Can't you all just go back to the October 2003 issue and replace "*VIII*" with "*IX*"? Well, to be fair, there's enough difference between *Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII* and *IX* that actually merits a full review.

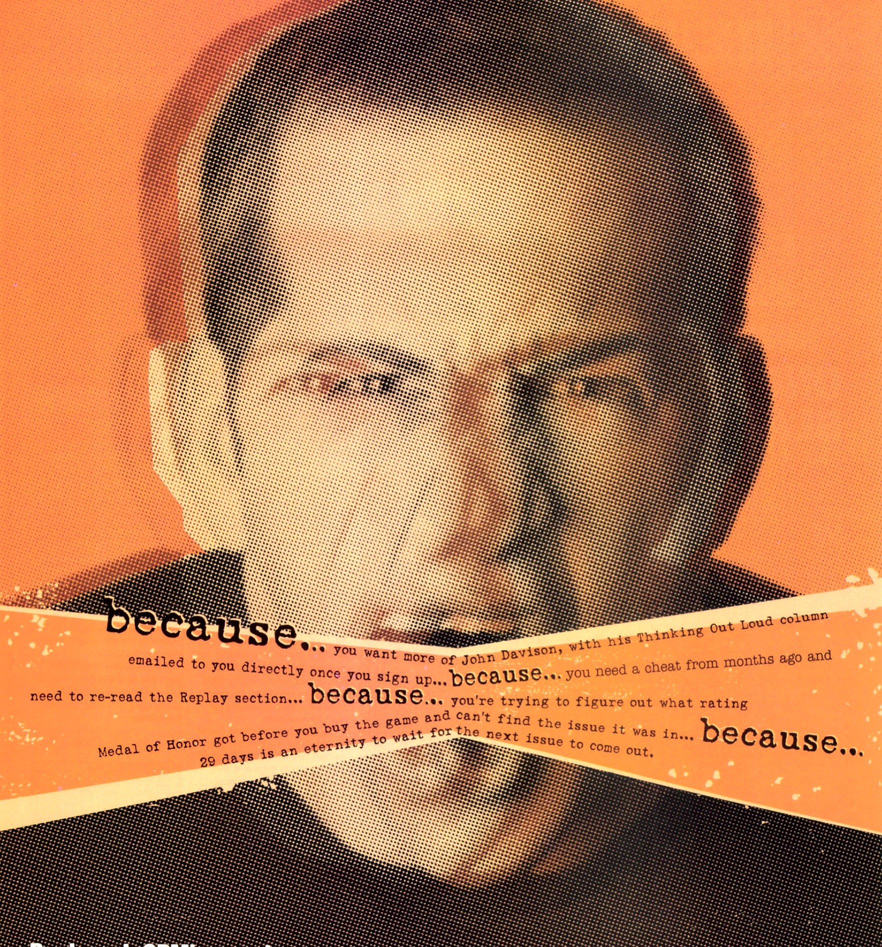
For one thing, this game looks like a PS2 game, by golly! OK, it's not pushing your PS2 to the limits with all sorts of pixel-shaded hoo-ha, but it does a very fine and serviceable job.

Oddly enough, *Romance IX* has streamlined gameplay to the point where it's basically a Chinese-upper-management sim. As a ruler, you're tasked with more overall strategy and development and less hands-on work. You end up delegating more, even to the point of not being part of the tactical battles. Rather than managing individual battles, you merely set up formations and direct officers, who then fight on their own with no input from you. While this efficient emphasis on overall strategy is well done, I do miss being able to manage single battles.

The streamlining and the new tutorial help make for a more accessible game, though. And the ability to import officers from the *Dynasty Warriors/Tactics* games is pretty cool, too. While *Romance IX* is a more newbie-friendly game, it still has a bit of a learning curve, and the absence of tactical control prevents it from being a breakout strategy title. Maybe things will be better by *Romance X* next year.

Thierry Nguyen

★★★



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"WE ARE THE WINNERS!"
In the early *Worms* games on the PC, you could record your own sound clips for your team's celebrations and defeats.

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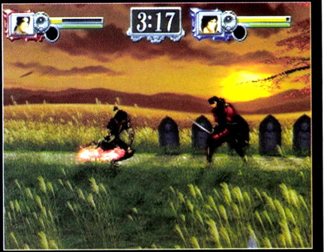
Destroy All



ONIMUSHA: BLADE WARRIORS

A cut below the rest

Publisher: Capcom
Developer: Capcom
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Teen

Whether you're talking about movies, books, TV shows, or games, there must be some unwritten rule that says offshoots are never quite as good as the original content they're derived from. Such is the case with *Onimusha: Blade Warriors,* which takes characters from both the original *Onimusha* and its sequel and places them in multitiered arenas to do battle.

Sounds like fun, to be sure, and if you've never played Capcom's *Powerstone* games (released on Dreamcast), then the novelty of running around small *Onimusha*-type environments, hopping from ledge to ledge, collecting items, and killing enemies is enough to keep you interested—for at least 20 minutes or so.

At that point it becomes painfully obvious how incredibly shallow and boring the game is. The single-player story mode offers little in the way of plot other than a few cut-scenes here and there that explain why all these characters have soul-absorbing gauntlets. The fact that several characters share some of these cut-scenes makes the story all the less interesting.

There is some extra incentive to play through the story and versus modes to unlock some cool hidden characters and acquire new weapons and items, some of which can be purchased with souls as opposed to just finding them in one of the several arenas. But ultimately, none of these items are really worth going after since they don't dramatically affect gameplay. They do give bonuses to individual character statistics, including strength, defense, and magic, but these are just as easily increased after the end of a match when you can spend souls to level up.

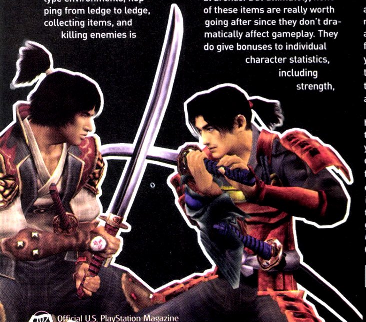
Beyond that, the *Blade Warriors* experience largely boils down to using a single combination of attacks. Of course, the varying difficulties require you to adapt your strategy, but you can always rely on the default combination to do most of the dirty work instead of having to use a variety of different attacks.

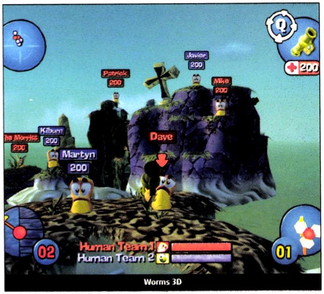
The same applies to the multiplayer mode. It's fun for the first few fights, but after a short while, all the hopping and sword slashing just becomes repetitive. You have to use more moves, which is good, but the move sets are just too limited to begin with.

Blade Warriors' problems are also caused by the environments, which look good but aren't all that interactive, save for trees, walls, or signs that you use as cover from projectiles. Otherwise, they're all pretty static and don't do much to add any variety to the gameplay.

Most of these types of games have a deceptive level of depth that requires you to use items, your default weapons, and the environment to succeed in a battle, but *Blade Warriors* almost completely ignores this formula in favor of simplistic "smash this single button repeatedly" gameplay. Oh well, there's still *Onimusha 3.*
Giancarlo Varanini

★★½





Worms 3D

WORMS 3D

Publisher: Acclaim
Developer: Team 17
MSRP: $29.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

You may never have played a 2D *Worms* game in the PS1 era—and that's a shame. *Worms Armageddon* and *Worms World Party* offer some of the best examples of how turn-based strategy—*thought-provoking* turn-based strategy—can also border on the hilarious. *Worms 3D* takes the formula from its 2D predecessors and less successfully adapts it to a 3D world.

The trademark humor returns, represented largely by your arsenal—everything from bazookas and cluster bombs to the devastating holy hand grenade, old woman, and mad cow. Oddly enough, the 3D-ness of it all doesn't terribly affect the thought process for *Worms* veterans—it simply allows for a full range of movement.

Soon enough, though, no matter how much you might be enjoying yourself, you realize that *Worms 3D* lacks the polish it needs to truly evolve the series. For one thing, the camera just plain sucks. You can zoom in close or zoom *way* out to get an overall view of the map, but you don't have the power to see something in between. Is it really that hard to institute a camera that allows you to zoom anywhere, say, like you'd find in a *Madden* replay? Also, whenever a worm lies close to an elevated area of some type, moving the camera anywhere near where you'd ideally like it to be proves quite the chore.

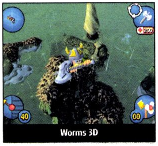
The move to 3D also significantly ups the death-by-drowning factor. In any given game, expect a good 75 percent of the warring annelids to die this way, making hit points mean little to nothing. Furthermore, the cool destructible environments come at the cost of horrible clipping issues—sometimes your worms actually get *stuck* on a section of the map.

But even with these technical inadequacies, it's hard not to have a great time playing *Worms 3D*. Of course, even though the two- and three-player games seem more enjoyable than four-player affairs, the game thrives as a multiplayer experience. But really, where's the online mode? It's an option on the Xbox and PC games—why not on PS2? And hasn't Team 17 learned by now that passing around one controller in a multiplayer game is a fine *option*? Meaning that if I own at least two controllers, I'd like to be able to give one to each player? Here you can't.

It's unfortunate these minor faults add up like they do. Without such annoyances, *Worms 3D* comes close to five-star material.
Chris Baker

★★★½

Worms 3D



Worms 3D

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FINAL FANTASY XI

You are here. And there. And yonder.

Getting around the world of *Final Fantasy XI* can be intimidating. So we're here to help by supplying street maps for you to remember where the heck everything is in town.

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NFL Street

Have a field day with these tips for handling the different types of playing grounds. Plus, essential information for putting together your team.

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Peripherals

Don't know which headset to pick? In a whirl about choosing a driving wheel? We've got our top picks for all the peripherals that plug in to your PS2.

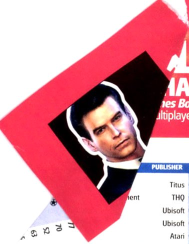
PS2 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

Game names in green indicate a Greatest Hits title. Ratings in red indicate a five-star score. A number ❶ indicates its rank in the top-selling games for each system. ⚡ indicates game supports online play.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
.hack//INFECTION	Bandai	★★★½	65
.hack//MUTATION	Bandai	★★★★	69
.hack//OUTBREAK	Bandai	★★★★	73
.hack//QUARANTINE	Bandai	★★★★	76
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	★★★★	52
4x4 EVO	GOD Games	★★★★	44
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	★★★★	58
Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies	**Namco**	★★★★½	**51**
Activision Anthology	Activision	★★★★	64
Aero Elite: Combat Academy	Sega	★★★	67
The Adventures of Cookie & Cream	Agetec	★★★½	44
Aggressive Inline	Acclaim	★★★★½	59
Airblade	Namco	★★★★	53
Airforce Delta Strike	Konami	★★★	78
Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction	EA Games	★★★½	72
All-Star Baseball 2002	Acclaim	★★★½	44
All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	★★★½	56
All-Star Baseball 2004	Acclaim	★★★	67
Alter Echo	THQ	★★	73
American Idol	Codemasters	★	77
⚡ Amplitude	Sony CEA	★★★★	68
Antz Extreme Racing	Empire	★½	61
Ape Escape 2	Ubisoft	★★★★½	70
Aqua Aqua	3DO	★★	42
Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits	Sony CEA	★★★★	70
Arctic Thunder	Midway	★	50
Armored Core 2	Agetec	★★★	39
Armored Core 2: Another Age	Agetec	★★★½	48
Armored Core 3	Agetec	★★★½	61
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	★★★½	44
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	★★	45
Army Men RTS	3DO	★★★★	56
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	★★½	45
ATV Offroad Fury	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**42**
⚡ ATV Offroad Fury 2	Sony CEA	★★★★	64
ATV Quad Power Racing 2	Acclaim	★★★★	66
⚡ Auto Modellista	Capcom	★★½	69
Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home	Eidos	★★½	75
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Interplay	★★★★½	52
❸ **Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II**	**Interplay**	★★★½	**77**

LIFE, LEVEL WARP, AND MONEY

Hold down L1+R1+△+□+○+✕. While holding them down, either press L2 or Start. If you press Start, you get a Cheat menu that allows for Level Warp (hit ○ to exit the menu) or Infinite Health (be careful, as you can still die by falling into pits). If you instead hit L2, your character gets bumped to level 10, and gets 45 skill points and 500,000 gold.



12

AKE IT!

es Bond 007

ltiplayer tips

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SIM IT!

The Sims: Bustin' Out

Get some Sim bling bling

118

ZAP IT!

Champions of Norrath

How to be erudite

	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
	Titus	★★	57
ent	THQ	★½	51
	Ubisoft	★★	74
	Ubisoft	★★★	51
	Atari	★★★½	65
	Vivendi Universal	★★★	76
	Ubisoft	★★★★	75
uckers	Empire	★★★	71
Bionicle: The Game	EA Games	★★½	75
Black & Bruised	Majesco	★★★★	67
Blade II	Activision	★★	62
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	★★★½	57
BloodRayne	Majesco	★★★½	63
Bloody Roar 3	Activision	★★★½	47
Bloody Roar 4	Konami	★	75
Blowout	Majesco	★★★	77
BMX XXX	Acclaim	★½	65
Bombastic	Capcom	★★½	72
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	Capcom	★★★★	67
Britney's Dance Beat	THQ	★★★★	58
The Bouncer	Square EA	★★★	42
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds	Sierra/Fox	★★★	73
Burnout	Acclaim	★★★★½	52
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	★★★★	63
Butt-Ugly Martians: Zoom or Doom!	Crave	★★	73
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	Activision	★★½	67
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts	Activision	★★½	76
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season	Activision	★★½	74
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	★★★★½	51
Carmen Sandiego: The Secret of the Stolen Drums	Bam	★★½	77
CART Fury	Midway	★	47
Casper: Spirit Dimensions	TDK Mediactive	★★½	50
Castlevania: Lament of Innocence	Konami	★★★★	74
The Cat in the Hat	Vivendi Universal	★★	76
⚡ Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest	Sony Online	★★★★½	78
Chaos Legion	Capcom	★★★½	70
⚡ Chessmaster	Ubisoft	★★★½	70
Choplifter: Crisis Shield	Xicat	★★★	69
City Crisis	Take-Two	★★★	48
Clock Tower 3	Capcom	★★★	68
Colin McRae Rally 3	**Codemasters**	★★★★★	**68**
Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	★★	62
Conflict: Desert Storm	Gotham Games	★½	63
Conflict: Desert Storm II	Gotham Games	★★★	74
Conflict Zone	Ubisoft	★★½	63
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	★★★★½	64
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	★★★★	46
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	**Universal**	★★★½	**51**
Crash Nitro Kart	Vivendi Universal	★★★½	76
Crazy Taxi	**Acclaim**	★★★★	**46**
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubisoft	★★	74
Culdcept	SNK	★★★½	75
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	★½	49
Dark Cloud	**Sony CEA**	★★★★½	**46**
Dark Cloud 2	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**66**
Dark Summit	THQ	★★★½	52
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	**Acclaim**	★★★½	**50**
DDRMAX	Konami	★★★★	63
DDRMAX 2	Konami	★★★★	74
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	★★★★½	39
Dead to Rights	Namco	★★★	65
Def Jam: Vendetta	EA Sports Big	★★★★	67
Defender	Midway	★★★½	62
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	★★★★½	56
Devil May Cry	**Capcom**	★★★★★	**50**
Devil May Cry 2	Capcom	★★★	66
Dino Stalker	Capcom	★★★½	61
Disaster Report	Agetec	★★★½	65
Disgaea: Hour of Darkness	Atlus	★★★★	72

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Disney Golf	EA Games	★★★★	61
Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure	Activision	★★★★	73
Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows	Ubisoft	★★½	63
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	★★★½	64
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubisoft	★★★½	42
Downforce	Titus	★★	57
Downhill Domination	Sony CEA	★★★★	71
Dr. Muto	Midway	★★½	63
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	Atari	★★★½	65
❽ **Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2**	**Atari**	★★½	**76**

UNLOCKABLE CHARACTERS

Here's a list of some unlockable characters and how to snag them.

Character	Condition
Android 16	Beat Android 16 with Goku.
Android 17	Beat Android 17 with Piccolo.
Android 18	Beat Android 18 with Krillen.
Android 20	Beat Android 20 with Goku.
Cell	Beat Cell with Goku.
Frieza	Beat Frieza with Goku.
Future Trunks	Beat Vegeta on Namek with Kid Trunks.
Ginyu	Beat Ginyu on Namek with Vegeta.
Gokule	Get Goku and Hercule's breakthrough.
Great Saiyaman	Beat Cell with Gohan.
Hercule	Beat Majin Buu as Great Saiyaman in Stage 6.
Nappa	Beat Nappa with Vegeta.
Raditz	Beat Raditz with Goku.
Recoome	Beat Recoome with Goku.
Supreme Kai	Beat Supreme Kai with Goku.
Teen Gohan	Beat Cell for the last time on Supreme Kai's planet with Adult Gohan.
Vegeta	Beat Vegeta on Namek with Goku.
Videl	Beat Super Buu (with Gohan absorbed) with Hercule.
Yamcha	Beat Nappa with Tien.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Dragon Rage	3DO	★½	54
Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	Sony CEA	★★★★	53
Drakengard	Square Enix USA	★★	78
Driven	Bam	★	52
Driving Emotion Type-S	Square EA	★★½	41
Drome Racers	EA Games	★★½	64
Dropship	Bam	★★★★	57
Dual Hearts	Atlus	★★★	61
Dynasty Tactics	Koei	★★★★½	61
Dynasty Tactics 2	Koei	★★★★	74
Dynasty Warriors 2	Koei	★★★★	38
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	★★★★	52
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends	Koei	★★★½	65
Dynasty Warriors 4	Koei	★★★★½	68
Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends	Koei	★★★½	75
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	Acclaim	★★½	56
Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness	Kemco	★★½	61
eJay Clubworld	Crave	★★	73
Endgame	Empire	★★	59
Enter the Matrix	Atari	★★★	71
Ephemeral Fantasia	Konami	★½	49
Escape From Monkey Island	**LucasArts**	★★★★★	**46**
⚡ ESPN College Hoops	Sega Sports	★★★½	76
ESPN International Track & Field	Konami	★★★	39
ESPN International Winter Sports 2002	Konami	★★★★	54
ESPN MLS Extra Time	Konami	★★	44
ESPN National Hockey Night	Konami	★½	45
ESPN NBA 2Night	Konami	★★	42
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002	Konami	★★★	56
⚡ ESPN NBA Basketball	**Sega Sports**	★★★★★	**75**
⚡ ESPN NHL Hockey	Sega Sports	★★★★½	73
⚡ ESPN NFL Football	Sega Sports	★★★★½	72
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	Konami	★★★	41
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002	Konami	★★★	53
ESPN X Games Skateboarding	Konami	★★★★	49

SPEAK!

Talk to her—or it

You can flip your disc over and call it a Konami sampler plate! Besides playing demos of Konami's soccer, vampire-hunting, firefighting, and command-a-girl games, you can try out for the Quidditch team or fight in the South American jungle. We've got even more Gran Turismo 4 information just for you, as well as some behind-the-scenes stuff for Final Fantasy XI *and* Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup. *Oh, and if you happen to have* DDRMAX2, *you'll find a neat little download that'll unlock everything.*

WINNING ELEVEN 7

THE DETAILS:
Select from five of the world's best teams for a brief match out on the pitch. Within the first few minutes of playing the demo, you'll understand why it's the king of soccer simulations.

HAVE YOU TRIED...

...changing formations?
You can move players into different formations on the field to shift your strategy and attack your opponent.

...scoring a goal with your head?
All the cool soccer players like to score goals via headers. You want to be cool, don't you?

LIFELINE

THE DETAILS:
The demo includes a training session on how to use the voice activation properly, as well as a chance for you to practice those skills by directing Rio through the investigation of a hotel room.

HAVE YOU TRIED...

...scoring 8,000 or higher in your pronunciation score?
The game rates your speaking on a scale of 0 to 10,000—see how perfect you can get!

...killing off the leeches?
Speak slowly and clearly when giving her instructions so she doesn't get confused.

CASTLEVANIA: LAMENT OF INNOCENCE

THE DETAILS:
You get a bit of a castle and two boss fights! Depending on where you go, you can take on either the Fire Elemental or the Golem. In between, you've got some jumping puzzles and some undead to kill.

HAVE YOU TRIED...

...pulling off cool whip combos?
Don't just mash □ and △—string them together! We particularly like □, □, □, △.

...blocking more often?
Just hold down R1. In fact, if the enemy is glowing purple, blocking will recover MP!

CHAIN DIVE

THE DETAILS:
A bizarre little Japanese demo that's part *Spider-Man*, part *Shinobi*. You freeze enemies and then attach your plasma chain to them to kill them. The trick is to try to chain-shatter them.

HAVE YOU TRIED...

...using the special Triangle attack?
This targets every enemy nearby and shatters them all at once. It eats up life, but it looks cool.

...freezing tons of enemies and chain-shattering them?
Our record so far is a 26-enemy chain.

BEST SUPER BOWL MOMENT
No, not Vinatieri
Delhomme's 85-yard
touchdown pa
moment.

NFL STREET

Straight up from EA

NFL Street might be a pretty straightforward game, but we all know there are certain tricks and strategies that will separate the newbies from players who are actually skilled. Instead of telling you to practice over and over, we got some hints straight from EA on designing a team as well as handling the different field types.

NFL CHALLENGE

In NFL Challenge mode, you can design your team from the beginning to focus on certain strengths, depending on your style of play. You will always want a balanced team, since different fields require different strategies, but you can create a team that is stronger on offense or defense.

BUILD A STRONG DEFENSIVE TEAM

To build a strong defensive team in NFL Challenge mode, start off by selecting the Balanced Team option and use your development points to increase the tackling level for defensive back Carl Cover to 10. The combination of Carl' s speed and his increased tackling ability will make him a threat on defense. Increase Ben MacLean's tackling level to 8. To build up more development points, run with Bill Dozer and pass with Ben MacLean on offense. As you acquire more development points, you can put them toward more speed and tackling for Artis Bald, as well as more tackling for Ben MacLean and Carl Cover. Don't take any of your players' attributes past level 16.

Hint: Place Rusty Baggs as a defensive lineman and play with three defensive linemen.

If you can show your style in City Limits, you're truly ready to show your A game.

BUILD A STRONG RUNNING TEAM

To build a strong running team in NFL challenge mode, start by using your development points to increase the carrying rating of your running back (Romo Swift) to level 12. Focus on selecting the challenges that make you run the ball. As you acquire more development points, increase your quarterback's speed and carrying rating to improve his performance on the option and scrambling in the backfield. You will also want to improve the level of blocking with your defensive backs so that they allow you the room to run outside.

Hint: If you are moving the ball successfully based on the above setup, start using your development points to improve your defense to balance out your team.

FIELD ADVANTAGES

Knowing how to build a power team is fine, but you also have to factor in the kind of ground you're on. Here's a quick rundown of the fields and what to do when playing on them.

CITY LIMITS

When you visit the City Limits (one of the tougher environments), you face a muddy field that can dramatically impact your game. Try a quick change of direction here, and you may find yourself on your backside without even being touched. You might think the answer is a power running attack, but *NFL Street* goes much deeper than that. Players with a high agility can more often deal with making moves on the mud. If you have an advantage in agility, you can turn that into points very quickly when defenders are unable to keep their feet after you put the juke or spin on them. On defense, you can use power moves to force offensive players to try to dance around in the mud—and possibly lose their footing in the process. If you can show your *NFL Street* style in City Limits, you're truly ready to show your A game.

THE WAREHOUSE

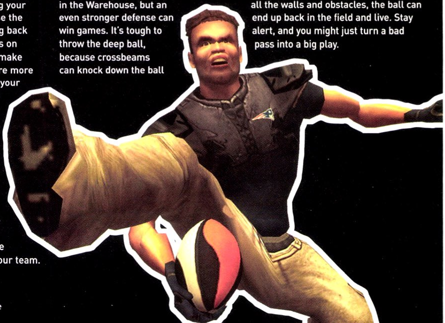
The Warehouse is big field that can feel very small from a smashing tackle against the fence, the wall, or a pillar. A strong running game can be dominant in the Warehouse, but an even stronger defense can win games. It's tough to throw the deep ball, because crossbeams can knock down the ball during the flight; if the play is still alive, it then becomes a jump ball to make the catch. However, it is possible to send a beautiful, tight spiral past the rays of light over the crossbeams and into your receiver's outstretched hands. Cones and oil drums litter parts of the playing field, so take a powerful running team with a daunting defense into the Warehouse.

DA ROOF

Da Roof is a long, narrow field bordered by walls that make it difficult to escape out of bounds. You'd best be prepared to be hit on Da Roof. The fence partially covers the top of this field, so long bombs can be stopped by the fence and knocked back down. You need to be careful when you try to air it out here. Da Roof is a turf-covered surface, so you can play the speed game—if you can get past the defenders on the narrow field. More often than not, power—not speed—will win the day here.

LATIN COURTYARD

The smallest of all the fields, the Latin Courtyard takes some getting used to. There are sidelines, but also plenty of obstacles to keep you from getting to them. You need to plan your plays carefully here in order to take advantage of the layout of the field. Watch for obstacles! There are crates of oranges and stacks of watermelons that can slow you down if you're not careful. The dry fountain on one side has seen some action, as many runners find that it stops them from getting wide for a big run. Look for tipped passes here—with all the walls and obstacles, the ball can end up back in the field and live. Stay alert, and you might just turn a bad pass into a big play.



GAME			
Eternal Ring			
Eve of Extinction			
Everblue 2			
Evergrace	Ag		
⚡ EverQuest Online Adventures	Sony Onlin		
⚡ EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers	Sony Online		
Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ	★★	
Evil Twin	Ubisoft	★★	
Evolution Skateboarding	Konami	★★½	
Evolution Snowboarding	Konami	★	6
Extermination	Sony CEA	★★½	48
Extreme-G III	Acclaim	★★★★	50
Eye Toy	Sony	★★★★½	74
F1 2001	**EA Sports**	**★★★★★**	**52**
F1 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	60
F1 Career Challenge	**EA Sports**	**★★★★★**	**71**
F1 Championship	Ubisoft	★★★★	43
F1 Championship Season 2000	EA Sports	★★½	41
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel	Interplay	★★½	78
Fantavision	Sony CEA	★★★★	40
Fatal Frame	Tecmo	★★★★	55
Fatal Frame 2: Crimson Butterfly	Tecmo	★★★★	77
Ferrari F355 Challenge	Sega	★★	61
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	★★★★½	39
FIFA 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	51
FIFA Soccer 2003	**EA Sports**	**★★★★★**	**63**
⚡ FIFA Soccer 2004	**EA Sports**	**★★★★★**	**75**
Fighter Maker 2	Agetec	★½	64
Final Fantasy X	**Square EA**	**★★★★★**	**53**
❺ **Final Fantasy X-2**	**Square Enix USA**	**★★★★★**	**75**

GOOD ENDING

Here's a quick guide to getting a good ending (not necessarily the best ending, but a damn fine one nonetheless):

First, in Chapter 3, go to Guadosalam and talk with Maechen. Afterward, talk to both Logos and Omni, then LeBlanc, and then talk to Logos and Omni again. They will tell you to meet them in their room. Go to the secret passageway and you'll see two spheres. Next, walk around the room until you find another sphere. Watch it and then talk to Maechen when he comes in. Talk to him some more after he's done. At the end of Chapter 3, when Yuna falls into the Farplane Abyss (the field of flowers), start pressing X until you hear some whistling. Follow the illuminated path, and when you reach the end, you'll be given the option to see something more. Hit "yes!" of course. Hopefully, if you've reached 100 percent completion, you'll get an even better ending.

⚡ Final Fantasy XI	**Square Enix USA**	**★★★★★**	**78**
Finding Nemo	THQ	★★★½	71
Fireblade	Midway	★★½	59
Fisherman's Challenge	Konami	★★	67
Ford Racing 2	Gotham Games	★★½	76
Forever Kingdom	Agetec	★½	53
Formula One 2001	Sony CEA	★★½	50
Freaky Flyers	Midway	★★★½	72
Freedom Fighters	**EA Games**	**★★★★★**	**73**
Freekstyle	EA Sports Big	★★★★	59
Freestyle Metal X	Midway	★★★	71
Frequency	Sony CEA	★★★½	52
Frogger: The Great Quest	Konami	★½	53
Frogger's Adventure: The Rescue	Konami	★★½	76
Fugitive Hunter	Encore	★	76
Funkmaster Flex's Digital Hitz Factory	XS Games	★★★★	76
Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge	Acclaim	★★★	46
Futurama	Vivendi Universal	★★½	72
G1 Jockey 3	Koei	★★★½	69
Gadget Racers	Conspiracy	★★★½	50
Galerians: Ash	Sammy	★½	66
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	★★	48
Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed	Tecmo	★★★	69
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Midway	★★★½	46
The Getaway	Sony CEA	★★★★	66
⚡ Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	Ubisoft	★★★½	78
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	★★★½	51
Gitaroo-Man	Koei	★★★½	53
Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance	Acclaim	★★	75

DID YOU KNOW?

The Tommy gun was named after John T. Thompson, who wanted a compact machine gun for his soldiers.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Gladius	LucasArts	★★★★	74
Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde	Jaleco	★★½	76
Godai: Elemental Force	3DO	★½	54
Gradius III and IV	Konami	★★½	39
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**46**
Grand Prix Challenge	Atari	★★★½	68
⑭ **Grand Theft Auto: Vice City**	**Rockstar**	★★★★★	**63**

Of all the cheats in this brilliant game, these are our personal favorites. So to get on with playing as someone new (although no one's cooler than Vercetti), punch these in during gameplay.

UNLOCKABLE SKINS

Ricardo Diaz	L1, L2, R1, R2, ↓, L1, R2, L2
Lance Vance	○, L2, ←, ⊗, R1, L1, ⊗, L1
Candy Suxxx	○, R2, ↓, R1, ←, →, R1, L1, ⊗, L2
Ken Rosenberg	→, L1, ↑, L2, L1, →, R1, L1, ⊗, R1
Hilary King	R1, ○, R2, L1, →, R1, L1, ⊗, R2
Love Fist Guy #1	↓, L1, ↓, L2, ←, ⊗, R1, L1, ⊗, ⊗
Love Fist Guy #2	R1, L2, R2, L1, →, R2, ←, ⊗, □, L1
Phil Cassidy	→, R1, ↑, R2, L1, →, R1, L1, →, ○
Sonny Forelli	○, L1, ○, L2, ←, ⊗, R1, L1, ⊗, ⊗
Mercedes	R2, L1, ↑, L1, →, R1, →, ↑, ○, △

GENERAL MAYHEM

Robocops	○, L1, ↓, L2, ←, ⊗, R1, L1, →, ⊗
Pedestrians Have Weapons	R2, R1, ⊗, △, ⊗, △, ↑, ↓
Gals Drop Weapons	→, L1, ○, L2, ←, ⊗, R1, L1, L1, ⊗
Media Level Meter	R2, ○, ↑, L1, →, R1, →, ↑, □, △
Hovering Cars	→, R2, ○, R1, L2, □, R1, R2
Strange Wheels	R1, ⊗, △, →, R2, ○, ↑, ↓, □
Double Your Car Speed	R1, R2, L1, L1, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
⑭ **Grand Theft Auto III**	**Rockstar**	★★★★★	**52**

MORE CODES

If you're kicking it up on this classic-before-the-other-classic, here are some codes for you. Just enter these anytime during gameplay.

Effect	Code
All Weapons	R2, R2, L1, R2, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑
Blow Up Car	L2, R2, L1, R1, L2, R2, △, □, ○, △, L2, L1
Clear Weather	L1, L2, R1, R2, R2, R1, L2, △
Cloudy Weather	L1, L2, R1, R2, R2, R1, L2, □
Crazy Pedestrians	R2, R1, △, ⊗, L2, L1, ↑, ↓
Faster Time	○, ○, ○, □, □, □, □, □, L1, △,○, △
Fog Weather	L1, L2, R1, R2, R2, R1, L2, ⊗
Full Armor	R2, R2, L1, L2, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑
Full Heath	R2, R2, L1, R1, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑
Get A Tank	○, ○, ○, ○, ○, ○, R1, L2, L1, △, ○, △
Great Handling In Car (Press L3 to jump!)	R1, L1, R2, L1, ←, R1, R1, △
Higher Wanted Level	R2, R2, L1, R2, ←, →, ←, →, ←, →
Lots of Money	R2, R2, L1, L1, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑
Lower Wanted Level	R2, R2, L1, R2, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑, ↓
Make Cars Invisible	L1, L1, □, R2, △, L1, △
Pedestrians All Hate You	↓, ↑, ←, ↑, ⊗, R1, R2, L1, L2
Pedestrians Box Each Other	→, R2, ○, R1, L2, ↓, L1, R1
Pedestrians Fight Each Other	↓, ↑, ←, ↑, X, R1, R2, L2, L1
Rainy Weather	L1, L2, R1, R2, R2, R1, L2, ○
Wear Any Outfit	→, ↓, ←, ↑, L1, L2, ↑, ←, ↓, →

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Grandia II	Ubisoft	★★★½	53
Grandia Xtreme	Enix	★★★½	62
Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt	Midway	½	61
The Great Escape	Gotham Games	★★★½	72
GTC Africa	Majesco	★★½	58
Guilty Gear X	Majesco/Sammy	★★★★	51
Guilty Gear X2	Sammy	★★★★	66
Gungrave	Sega	★★★½	61
Gungriffon Blaze	Working Designs	★★★½	39
Half-Life	**Sierra**	★★★★★	**51**
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	EA Games	★★★	75
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	★★★½	64

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	EA Games	★½	76
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	★★★★	51
Haunted Mansion	TDK	★★★	77
Haven: Call of the King	Midway	★★★½	64
Headhunter	Acclaim	★★★	57
Herdy Gerdy	Eidos	★★★	56
Heroes of Might and Magic	3DO	★★½	46
Hidden Invasion	Conspiracy	★★★	60
High Heat MLB 2002	3DO	★★★★	44
High Heat MLB 2003	3DO	★★★★½	55
High Heat MLB 2004	**3DO**	★★★★★	**67**
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	Eidos	★★★★½	63
The Hobbit	Vivendi Universal	★★★½	76
Hot Shots Golf 3	Sony CEA	★★★★	55
Hot Wheels: Velocity X	THQ	★★½	64
The Hulk	Vivendi Universal	★★★★	70
Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward	Interplay	★★½	72
Hypersonic Xtreme	Majesco	★★½	67
I-Ninja	Namco	★★★½	75
Ico	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**50**
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts	★★★	71
Indy Car Series	Codemasters	★★★	71
Intellivision Lives!	Crave	★★★½	77
Island Extreme Stunts	EA Games	★★★½	65
The Italian Job	Eidos	★★	72
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubisoft	★★★½	53
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**52**
Jak II	Sony CEA	★★★½	74
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire	EA Games	★★★★	52
James Bond 007: NightFire	Activision	★★★★½	64
James Cameron's Dark Angel	Sierra	★★	65
Jeopardy!	Atari	★★½	77
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World	Acclaim	★	53
Jet X20	Sony CEA	★★	63
Jonny Moseley Mad Trix	3DO	★½	54
The Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove	Ubisoft	★★★	69
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	Universal Int.	★★★★½	68
K-1 World Grand Prix	Konami	★★	71
Karaoke Revolution	Konami	★★★★	75
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision	★★★½	61
Kengo: Master of Bushido	Crave	★★★	42
Kessen	EA Games	★★★	39
Kessen II	Koei	★★★	51
Kill.Switch	Namco	★★★★½	75
Kinetica	Sony CEA	★★★★½	50
The King of Fighters 2000/2001	Bandai	★★½	76
The King of Route 66	Sega	★★★	67
King's Field: The Ancient City	Agetec	★★	55
Kingdom Hearts	Square EA	★★★★½	61
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil	Namco	★★★★½	47
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	★★★★	42
Knockout Kings 2002	EA Sports	★★★★	55
Kya: Dark Lineage	Atari	★★½	76
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	★★½	48
Legacy of Kain: Defiance	Eidos	★★½	76
Legaia 2: Duel Saga	Fresh Games	★★★	63
The Legend of Alon D'ar	Ubisoft	★½	54
Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	★★½	53
Legends of Wrestling II	Acclaim	★★★	65
Legion: The Legend of Excalibur	Midway	★★★	59
Lego Racers 2	Lego Media	★★½	51
Lethal Skies	Sammy	★★★	58
Lethal Skies II	Sammy	★★★½	74
Looney Tunes: Back in Action	EA Games	★	76
The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring	Black Label	★★★½	63
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	EA Games	★★★★½	63
⚡ **The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King**	**EA Games**	★★★★★	**75**
Lowrider	Jaleco	★½	77
Lupin the 3rd: Treasure of the Sorcerer King	Bandai	★★★½	78
Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal	★★	71
Mad Maestro!	Eidos/Fresh	★★★	56
Madden NFL 2001	EA Sports	★★★★½	38
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	48
⚡ **Madden NFL 2003**	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**60**

REPLAY FORUM

FFX-2 MANIA

In Chapter 5, you run into some nasty enemies who are hard to kill even if you have pretty strong characters. In Djose Temple, the Al Bhed out-of-control machina monster you can battle is strengthened based on how many machine parts you dig up in the desert. I had done over 100 successful digs. Whoops, my hard work came back to kill me. No worries, though, just equip two of your party members in the Gun Mage dressphere, one as the White Mage, and, if you have them, equip any accessories that boost your max HP. Cast Protect and Heal as necessary, attacking if you want. Most importantly, you need to hold out until the crazed machina uses Annihilation, at which point your Gun Mages will both learn it with the Blue Bullet ability! Shoot that right back at him, dealing 9,999 HP damage each time and taking him down in two shots! Annihilation is also useful when battling Angra Mainyu in Bikanel Desert, but only in Chapter 5. You can probably deal more than 9,999 damage if you get the Break HP Limit ability earlier in the game, but I didn't try that.

Jaciones
torraastarte
@earthlink.net

Thanks for this first of many *FFX-2*-related tips. We now know just how popular this game is.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
⑦ ⚡ **Madden NFL 2004**	**EA Sport s**	★★★★★	**72**

CHEAP WAY TO MAKE MONEY

Start a regular game (season or home playoff), save, and then quit. Reload your franchise file, and it will resume where you last saved, but the computer will recharge everyone, so all your ticket sales, concessions, and whatnot will be doubled. This only works when you're the home team, though.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
④ **Mafia**	**Gathering**	★★★½	**79**

RELOAD TIME

Don't just hit the reload gun button at random. *Mafia* is one of the few games where reloading a gun means you discard the bullets already inside it. So if you reload a six-shooter after the first shot, you waste five bullets. Always wait until you're either out of bullets, or you just have one left in the chamber.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color	Agetec	★★★★	69
⑩ **Manhunt**	**Rockstar**	★★★½	**76**

STAR POWER

Here's a breakdown of how the star system works. The stars represent how well you played (at the end of the game, you get a score that is based on all the stars you got added together). For every level in which you get three stars, you open artwork (available under Bonus Features on the Main menu). The 20 levels are broken down into groups of five (1-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20); if you get three or more stars in any of those groups, you open up a bonus level, of which there are four total. Finally, if you score five stars in a level (only available by playing on Hardcore difficulty), you open part of a code; these codes show up on the artwork itself.

GOD MODE

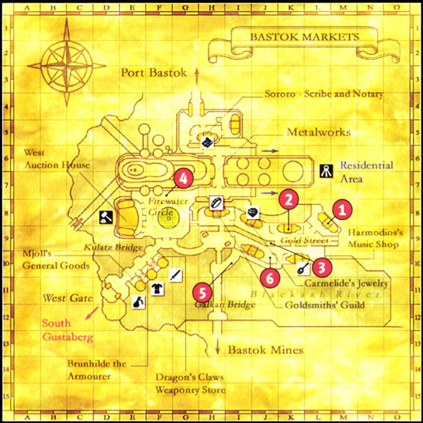
Here's a code just for you. You need to finish the game on Fetish difficulty first and then key this in on the Title screen: ↓, ↓, ○, ↑, □, △, □, R2, ↑, ↑, L1, △.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
The Mark of Kri	Sony CEA	★★★	59
Marvel vs. Capcom 2	Capcom	★★★★	61
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Activision	★★★★	60
Max Payne	Rockstar	★★★★	53
Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne	Rockstar	★★★½	77
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	Capcom	★★★½	54
Maximo vs. Army of Zin	Capcom	★★★★	77
MDK2 Armageddon	Interplay	★★★½	45
Medal of Honor: Frontline	**EA Games**	★★★★★	**58**
⚡ Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	EA Games	★★★½	76
Mega Man X7	Capcom	★★★½	74
Men in Black II: Alien Escape	Infogrames	★★½	60
Metal Arms: Glitch in the System	Vivendi Universal	★★★★	75
Metal Gear Solid 2	**Konami**	★★★★★	**51**
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	**Konami**	★★★★★	**67**
Metropolismania	Natsume	★★★	61
Midnight Club	**Rockstar**	★★★★	**39**
⚡ **Midnight Club II**	**Rockstar**	★★★★★	**67**
Midway Arcade Treasures	Midway	★★★½	76
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing	Codemasters	★	58
Minority Report	Activision	★★½	65
Mission: Impossible–Operation Surma	Atari	★★	77
Mister Mosquito	Eidos/Fresh	★★★½	56
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	★★★	67
MLB Slugfest 20-03	Midway	★★★★	59
MLB Slugfest 20-04	Midway	★★★★	67
Mobile Light Force 2	XS Games	★★★½	69
Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space	Bandai	★	75
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	★★★½	61
Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo	Bandai	★	48

www.playonline.com/ff11us/vt
Home of the Vana'diel Tribune, the online journal of *FFXI*—complete with columns written by in-game characters!

FINAL FANTASY XI

One of the first challenges upon jumping into FFXI is the simple matter of getting around. With that in mind, for the next three months, we'll print maps of the three major cities to make sure you always know where you are. On top of that, we'll present a few entry-level quests that should prove particularly profitable. This month we feature Bastok, home to humes and galka. Happy adventuring!


BASTOK MARKETS
Port Bastok
Sororo - Scribe and Notary
Metalworks
West Auction House
Residential Area
4
Firewater Circle
2
1
Harmodios's Music Shop
Gold Street
Kulatz Bridge
Mjoll's General Goods
3
6
Carmelide's Jewelry
5
Blackash River
West Gate
Galkan Bridge
Goldsmiths' Guild
South Gustaberg
Bastok Mines
Brunhilde the Armourer
Dragon's Claws Weaponry Store

QUESTS: BASTOK MARKETS

❶ **GOURMET** Salimah is looking for ingredients for a meal. Trade her a wild onion between the hours of 12:00 and 17:59 (Vana'diel time), and she'll pay you 350 gil. If you give her sleep shrooms between 18:00 and 5:59 or treant bulbs between 6:00 and 11:59, she'll pay you 200 gil.

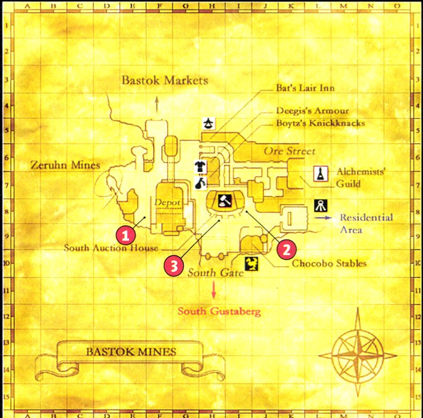
❷ **A FLASH IN THE PAN** Aquilina needs four flint stones to make dinner for her family. Trade them to her, and she'll give you 100 gil in return. Note that while you can repeat this quest, there's a certain timing to it; you'll need to wait at least six hours of game time to trade her another four stones.

❸ **BRYGID, THE STYLIST** Brygid wants to see you wearing a bronze subligar and a robe. You'll look ridiculous, but she'll love it and give you gloves in return.

❹ **BUCKETS OF GOLD** Foss will pay 300 gil for every five rusty buckets you trade to him. You'll often catch rusty buckets while fishing, but you'll need a strong rod to pull them up without the line or the rod breaking.

❺ **THE BARE BONES** Degenhard has a riddle for you: He wants you to guess the secret to his long, healthy life. The title of this quest should indicate what he's looking for; bring him a bone chip, and he'll give you a map of the Dangruf Wadi.

❻ **STAMP HUNT** Arawn wants you to collect stamps from seven guards in the city. In Bastok Markets, talk to Pavel near the West Gate. In Bastok Mines, talk to Deadly Spider on the second level of the depot and to Tall Mountain in the lower level next to the alchemist guild. In Metalworks, talk to Romulado in the cannonade and Elayne in the temple (on the lowest level). And in Port Bastok, talk to Latifa just north of the drawbridge and Ehrhard outside of the warehouse (roughly at G-5 on your map).


Bastok Markets
Bat's Lair Inn
Deegis's Armour
Boytz's Knickknacks
Ore Street
Zeruhn Mines
Alchemists' Guild
Depot
Residential Area
1
South Auction House
2
3
Chocobo Stables
South Gate
South Gustaberg
BASTOK MINES

QUESTS: BASTOK MINES

❶ **MINESWEEPER** Gerbaum will pay 150 gil for every three pinches of Zeruhn soot you bring him. Most creatures in Zeruhn Mines drop the soot, and you can repeat this quest as often as you like. Before you go into the mines, though, check out the next quest.

❷ **GROCERIES** Tami wants you to bring a grocery list to her husband, Zellman. He's inside the mines, at the first left. Read the list before you give it to him; it indicates that you should pick up some meat jerky. Once you talk to Zellman, stop at the Bat's Lair Inn on the way back to Tami and pick up the jerky. Trade the jerky to her, and she'll reward you with a rabbit mantle.

❸ **THE SIREN'S TEAR** Wahid needs you to pick up a siren's tear for him. This can be found around J-9 in North Gustaberg—look for the "???" near the river. But there's a catch: You must have absolutely nothing in your possession in order to pick up the tear, so drop off everything you own at your mog house before you head out.

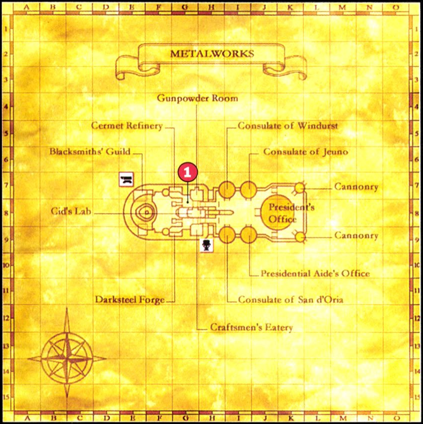
We're gonna put together an *FFXI* roster at some point. Want to meet up with other OPMers? E-mail us at opm@ziffdavis.com with your character name, server, and home city.

1 The number of residents of Vana'diel as of January 17, 2004—in *millions*.

SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE

One of the soon-to-be-implemented features of *Final Fantasy XI* is Limbo, "a malevolent world that exists behind the curtain of reality."

BASTOK REVEALED



QUESTS: METALWORKS

① **THE GUSTABERG TOUR** Izabele wants to try out a business idea, and she needs your help. Put together a party of six players no higher than level 5 and head to North Gustaberg to meet with Hunting Bear in F-8. Arrange your group around Hunting Bear and then talk to him; he'll give every party member 500 gil.

QUESTS: PORT BASTOK

① **BEAUTY AND THE GALKA** Talk to Talib in Warehouse 2. Afterward, trade him one zinc ore; he'll give you a note to take to Parraggoh in the Bastok Mines district. You can find Parraggoh in the first house on the left in the lower level (immediately to the left after entering the mines), and he'll give you a bronze knife. From now on, you can trade four zinc ores to Talib in return for 350 gil.

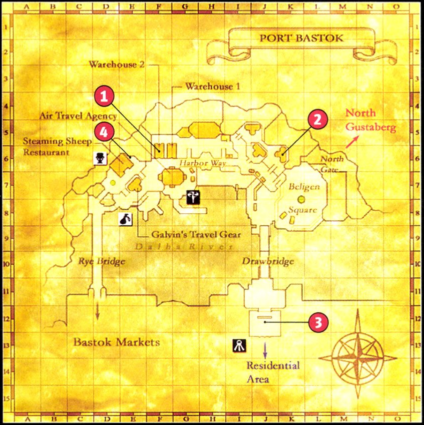
② **THE QUADAV'S CURSE** Poor Corann wants a quadav backplate to hide under. You'll find these on the lowest-level quadav in Gustaberg. Bring him one, and he'll give you a bronze subligar (perfect for your date with Brygid in the markets).

③ **A LADY'S HEART** Valah Molkot wants a red flower—but not just any red flower. Pick up an amaryllis from the auction house or another player's bazaar and trade it to her, and you'll get a very unique reward. Now you can exit to any part of the city any time you go into your mog house, no matter where you entered.

FAME!

Wanna live forever? Get yourself known

Quests aren't just for raking in money and items, but also for increasing your fame rating in that particular city. Fame is significant because the more popular you get with the townspeople, the better the deals you get at the shops. Shopkeepers will offer you items for less than they would to someone who's entirely unknown, and they give you more gil when you sell items to them (which is generally not a great idea, since you can usually get far more money at the auction house). Furthermore, certain quests become available only as your fame increases. To check your fame in Bastok, visit Falco in Port Bastok at ④. He will tell you whether he's heard of you; the more enthusiastic his greeting, the higher your fame.



BUILDING A BETTER BANKROLL

The fastest way to the bling bling

All these quests are useful in that they generate either items or gil, but the quickest way to wealth is selling items to other players. *FFXI* offers two ways to do this: the auction house and the bazaar system. There's an auction house in almost every section of every city, and they're linked together so that items put up for sale in one city can be purchased in another. This is significant because certain items are more readily available in certain areas of Vana'diel than others. That means you can collect, harvest, or create items fairly easily and then sell them via the auction house to players who don't have the access to the materials you have. Occasionally, you can even buy an item outright from a merchant and sell it immediately through the auction house—for twice as much. Since the inventories of shops differ from location to location, some players find it easier to pay a premium for certain items to avoid the hassle of hunting the items down themselves. Taking advantage of these rich, lazy bastards is enriching both in the monetary and the spiritual sense.

The drawbacks of this system are twofold. First, it's not a true auction system: If anyone has the item you're selling listed at a cheaper price, theirs automatically sells first. Similarly, there's no bidding to drive up the price of your item; the purchasers simply indicate the price they're willing to pay, and the system informs them whether the item is available at that price or not. And second, both purchased items and gil paid for sold items are delivered to your mog house, not to you directly. So selling an item requires a special trip to retrieve the profits, which isn't always helpful.

Then there's the bazaar system, which offers similar profit potential in an easier, portable, more instantly gratifying package. Selecting Bazaar from the Main menu allows you to set a price for just about any item in your inventory. Once you do, other players will see a pouch icon next to your name; they can check your character to see what you have for sale and buy it straight from your backpack. Because you're selling to players only in your immediate vicinity, you won't get the benefit of selling to clueless newbies from other nations, and you generally won't be able to inflate your prices quite as much (though you could make a killing by bringing a pack full of antidotes to an area infested with poisoning monsters). But the ease of the system easily balances out the drawbacks.

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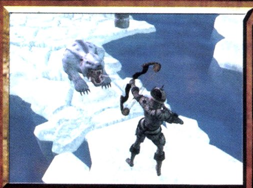

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Game Experience may change during online play

IN THE MIX
Shout out to BradyGames for its RPG tips.

RPGS FOR YOU AND ME

Mascots and grunties! The cutest parts of FFX-2 and .hack right here!

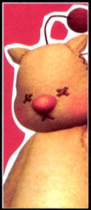
FINAL FANTASY X-2: MASCOTS

You gain the Mascot dressphere during Chapter 5 by acquiring an Episode Complete in every area except Bevelle. Upon achieving all the Episode Completes, an extra scene will show the Gullwings returning to the *Celsius* bridge and obtaining the dressphere. However, if Zanarkand is the last Episode Complete you acquire, you will not get it, so make sure Zanarkand Ruins is not the last place you visit.

Despite its humorous appearance, the Mascot dressphere is definitely one of the best. In addition to learning a whole series of unique abilities with multiple effects, each character can also gain the ability to use the abilities of two other dresspheres. This enables all three characters to be both devastating and helpful at once, all while defeating enemies in the process.

During combat, cast spells and use Mascot abilities to boost the party and weaken the enemies, then use normal attacks or the special attacks of other dresspheres to defeat enemies. If your allies get into trouble, use restorative and curative abilities to bring them back up to speed. Any party will rely heavily on the Mascot character—that is, unless you equip *every* character with the Mascot dressphere.

Main commands: Attack, Mascot, Secondary Attack Abilities, Secondary Magic Abilities, Item



YUNA'S MOOGLE ABILITIES

Name	AP	MP	Description	Required Abilities
Attack	0	0	Attack one enemy.	None
Moogle Jolt	40	0	Restore MP to one character.	None
Moogle Cure	0	10	Cure one character of status ailments and restore HP.	None
Moogle Regen	0	18	Cast Haste and Regen on one character.	None
Moogle Wall	0	18	Cast Shell and Protect on one character.	None
Moogle Life	0	40	Revive one KO'd character and fully restore HP and MP.	None
Moogle Curema	40	15	Restore HP and cure the party's status ailments.	None
Moogle Regenja	40	24	Cast Haste and Regen on the party.	None
Moogle Wallja	40	24	Cast Shell and Protect on the party.	None
Moogle Lifeja	40	60	Revive all party members and fully restore HP and MP.	None
Moogle Beam	80	99	Damage one enemy.	*
Ribbon	999	0	Guards against all status ailments.	*
Auto-Shell	80	0	Automatically casts Shell.	None
Auto-Protect	80	0	Automatically casts Protect.	Auto-Shell
Swordplay	80	0	Use Warrior skills.	None
Arcana	80	0	Use Dark Knight skills.	None

RIKKU'S CAIT SITH ABILITIES

Name	AP	MP	Description	Required Abilities
Attack	0	0	Attack one enemy.	None
Cait Fire	0	12	Fire damage to enemies. Sometimes Poison/Petrification.	None
Cait Thunder	0	12	Lightning damage to enemies. Sometimes Poison/Petrification.	None
Cait Blizzard	0	12	Ice damage to enemies. Sometimes Poison/Petrification.	None
Cait Water	0	12	Water damage to enemies. Sometimes Poison/Petrification.	None
Power Eraser	40	12	Lower Strength of all enemies.	None
Armor Eraser	40	12	Lower Defense of all enemies.	None
Magic Eraser	40	12	Lower Magic of all enemies.	None
Mental Eraser	40	12	Lower Magic Defense of all enemies.	None
Speed Eraser	40	12	Lower Evasion of all enemies.	None
PuPu Platter	80	48	Instantly defeat all enemies. Sometimes fails.	*
Ribbon	999	0	Guards against all status ailments.	*
Auto-Shell	80	0	Automatically casts Shell.	None
Auto-Protect	80	0	Automatically casts Protect.	Auto-Shell
Instinct	80	0	Use Berserker skills.	None
White Magic	80	0	Cast white magic spells.	None

PAINE'S TONBERRY ABILITIES

Name	AP	MP	Description	Required Abilities
Attack	0	0	Attack one enemy.	None
Dark Knife	0	10	Inflict damage and Darkness on one enemy.	None
Silence Knife	0	10	Inflict damage and Silence on one enemy.	None
Sleep Knife	0	10	Inflict damage and Sleep on one enemy.	None
Berserk Knife	0	10	Inflict damage and Berserk on one enemy.	None
Poison Knife	0	10	Inflict damage and Poison on one enemy.	None
Stone Knife	0	10	Inflict damage and Petrification on one enemy.	None
Stop Knife	0	10	Inflict damage and Stop on one enemy.	None
Quartet Knife	0	10	Lower one enemy's Strength, Defense, Magic, and Magic Defense.	None
Arsenic Knife	0	10	Instantly defeat one enemy. Sometimes fails.	None
Cactling Gun	80	99	Inflict heavy damage on one enemy.	*
Ribbon	999	0	Guards against all status ailments.	*
Auto-Shell	80	0	Automatically casts Shell.	None
Auto-Protect	80	0	Automatically casts Protect.	Auto-Shell
Bushido	80	0	Use Samurai skills.	None
Black Magic	80	0	Cast black magic spells.	None

* Must know Warrior's SOS Protect ability to learn.

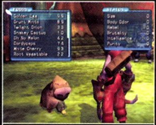
Send us more tips about *FFX-2*—just shoot an email over to opm@ziffdavis.com.

.HACK//QUARANTINE: RAISING A GRUNTY

Supposedly cherished and revered within *.hack*'s game world, grunties function as combination mounts, allies, and keys for some of the side functions of the game. These large creatures, looking somewhat like a cross between a cow, a pig, and a dog, can carry Kite around the various fields and converse with him much like another character. This section explains how you can raise the various types of grunties on each server, as well as the functions of the creatures once they've been raised to adulthood.

CARE AND FEEDING OF YOUR GRUNTY

On each server, Kite can raise three different types of grunties. One of these is the same on each server: the Noble Grunty. The other two types are different for each server. The grunties start out as small babies at the server's grunt shop, but Kite can raise them using grunty food and bring them through their various stages until they reach adulthood.



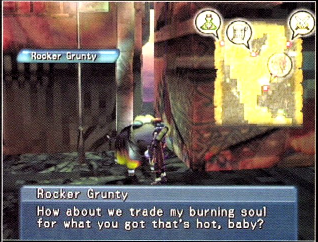
Kite finds a new friend!

Be careful when mounting.

Speak to the man at one of the various grunt shops (found on every server except for Δ Server) for pointers on raising a grunty. The grunty itself wanders around as a baby near the man within the grunt shop's corral. When you speak to the baby, you are given the chance to feed him one type of grunty food at a time, although you can give him multiple units of the chosen food type all at once if you wish.

Each time you speak to the baby grunty after the first feeding, it gives you a veiled hint about what it wants to eat next. Watch the box on the upper right side of the screen to see the effects of each food as you give it to the grunty. When the creature reaches size 10, it undergoes a growth spurt and begins to give you hints about the next type of food it wants. At size 20, the grunty grows to juvenile size and begins to tell you straight out which type of food it wants next. It undergoes another minor growth spurt at size 30, changing to its final adult stage at size 40.

If you wish to stop feeding a grunty—for example, if you run out of the type of food it wants next—you can leave at any time and come back



Rocker Grunty
How about we trade my burning soul for what you got that's hot, baby?

Rocking out with the Rocker Grunty.

Don't fall for the Rocker Grunty. Poochie is the real deal when it comes to musical animals.

$345 Total cost of the *.hack* experience, which includes all the games, DVDs, and three novels.

later. Once the grunty reaches adulthood, it remains around the grunt shop while Kite is within the Root Town. After Kite leaves the town and returns, the grunty takes up its normal fixed position within the town, and Kite can then raise another grunty on the server. Once Kite has raised all three grunty types on a server, he cannot raise any more there, and no more baby grunties appear at the grunt shop.

GRUNTY FUNCTIONS

In town (trading and flag racing)

Adult grunties stand at a specific position in the Root Town where they were raised except when they're being raced. When Kite finds a grunty in one of these spots, he can speak or trade with it just as he would a PC.

A grunty can also be used in the Root Town for the flag race. This is covered in the Side Quests menu and can only be accessed when you've raised all three grunty types on a server. Go to that section of the book or speak to the grunty shopkeeper after raising all three of the server's grunty types for more details.

In the field (riding and searching)

When Kite raises his very first grunty, it rewards him with a key item known as the Grunty Flute. This cannot be used within a town or dungeon or during a fight. However, if Kite is in a field and not in combat, he can select the Grunty Flute from the Event Items submenu and use it to summon one of the grunties raised on that server. The flute cannot be used on Δ Server or where Kite has not yet raised a grunty.

When Kite summons a grunty, he automatically begins to ride it, which allows him to move quickly and not trigger any dungeon portals. If there are wandering monsters within one of the non-key fields, they do not approach and attack so long as Kite remains mounted. Kite can also use the grunty search function first introduced in the last volume of *.hack*.

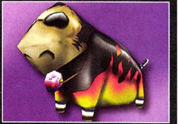
GRUNTY SEARCH INFORMATION

Field Feature	Θ Server	Λ Server	Σ Server
Grunty food	Noble Grunty	Noble Grunty	Noble Grunty
Field portals	Poison Grunty	Snakey Grunty	Milky Grunty
Dungeon entrance	Iron Grunty	Bony Grunty	Aqua Grunty

Θ SERVER GRUNTIES

ROCKER GRUNTY

Stat	Rating
Body Odor	3 to 17
Rebel	8 to 22
Brutality	-2 to 12
Intelligence	8 to 22
Purity	13 to 27



MILKY GRUNTY*

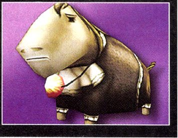
Stat	Rating
Body Odor	5 to 25
Rebel	5 to 25
Brutality	-5 to 15
Intelligence	10 to 30
Purity	0 to 20

*A grunty with these stats only becomes a Snakey Grunty if it does not also meet the requirements for a Rocker Grunty.

NOBLE GRUNTY**

Stat	Rating
Body Odor	Any
Rebel	Any
Brutality	Any
Intelligence	Any
Purity	Any

**A grunty only becomes a Noble Grunty if it does not meet the requirements for either a Rocker or Snakey Grunty.



GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front	Bandai	★★★	54
Mojo!	Crave	★★½	73
Monopoly Party	Infogrames	★★★	65
Monster 4x4: Masters of Metal	Ubisoft	★★½	77
Monster Rancher 3	Tecmo	★★★★	50
Monster Rancher 4	Tecmo	★★★½	75
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	★★★½	55
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Midway	★★★★	64
MotoGP	Namco	★★★★	39
MotoGP2	Namco	★★★★½	53
MotoGP3	Namco	★★★★½	67
Motor Mayhem	Infogrames	★★★	47
MTV Music Generator 2	Codemasters	★★★	46
MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	Gotham Games	★½	76
The Mummy Returns	Universal	★½	52
Music Maker	Magix	★★★★	69
MVP Baseball 2003	EA Sports	★★★½	67
MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	★★★★	47
MX Rider	Infogrames	★★★½	52
MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	★★★½	59
⚡ My Street	Sony CEA	★★★	67
Myst III: Exile	Ubisoft	★★★½	63
Mystic Heroes	Koei	★★½	64
Namco Museum	Namco	★★★½	53
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	★★½	40
NASCAR Heat	Infogrames	★★★★	47
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	51
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	★★★★½	62
⚡ NASCAR Thunder 2004	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**73**
NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona	Infogrames	★★★½	63
Naval Ops: Warship Gunner	Koei	★★★	71
NBA 2K2	**Sega Sports**	★★★★★	**53**
⚡ NBA 2K3	**Sega Sports**	★★★★★	**63**
NBA Hoopz	Midway	★★★	44
NBA Jam 2004	Acclaim	★★½	75
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	★★★	42
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	★★½	51
⚡ NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	★★★★	63
⓫ ⚡ **NBA Live 2004**	**EA Sports**	★★★★½	**75**

Type these codes into the Password screen to get more Nikes.

DG56TRF446	Air Foamposite Pro Colorway 1
3245AFSD45	Air Foamposite Pro Colorway 2
DSAKF38422	Air Foamposite Pro Colorway 3
A0K374HF8S	Air Hyperflight Colorway 3
JCX93LSS88	Air Hyperflight Colorway 4
367UEY6SN	Air Zoom Flight Colorway 1
2389JASE3E	Air Flightposite II Colorway 2
GF9845JHR4	Air Flight 89 Colorway 3

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NBA ShootOut 2001	Sony CEA	★★½	44
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	★★★	63
⚡ NBA ShootOut 2004	Sony CEA	★★★	75
NBA Starting Five	Konami	★★½	63
NBA Street	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★★	**47**
NBA Street Vol. 2	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★★	**68**
⚡ NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega Sports	★★★★	64
NCAA College Football 2K3	Sega Sports	★★½	60
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	★	41
NCAA Final Four 2002	Sony CEA	★½	52
NCAA Final Four 2003	Sony CEA	★★½	64
⚡ NCAA Final Four 2004	Sony CEA	★★	76
NCAA Football 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	48
⚡ NCAA Football 2003	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**60**
⚡ NCAA Football 2004	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**71**
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	★½	41
NCAA GameBreaker 2003	Sony CEA	★★	61
⚡ NCAA GameBreaker 2004	Sony CEA	★★½	73
NCAA March Madness 2002	EA Sports	★★★	53
NCAA March Madness 2003	EA Sports	★★★	64
⚡ NCAA March Madness 2004	EA Sports	★★★★	76
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	**EA Games**	★★★★★	**62**
❷ ⚡ **Need for Speed Underground**	**EA Games**	★★★★½	**76**

UNLOCK ALL TRACKS

Enter these codes at the Main menu to unlock all tracks of each type of race.

Unlockable	Code
All circuit tracks	⬇, R1, R1, R1, R2, R2, R2, □
All drag tracks	➡, □, ⬅, R1, □, L1, L2, R2
All drift tracks	⬅, ⬅, ⬅, ⬅, ➡, R2, R1, L2
All sprint tracks	⬆, R2, R2, R2, R1, ⬇, ⬇, ⬇
Drift physics in all modes	R1, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬇, ⬇, ⬇, L1

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NFL 2K2	**Sega Sports**	★★★½	**52**
⚡ NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	★★★★½	60
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	★★★★	55
NFL Blitz 20-03	Midway	★★★½	60
⚡ NFL Blitz Pro	Midway Sports	★★★	74
NFL GameDay 2001	Sony CEA	★	40
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	★½	53
⚡ NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	★★½	61
⚡ NFL GameDay 2004	Sony CEA	★★★	73
NFL Quarterback Club 2001	Acclaim	★★½	50
❶ ⚡ **NFL Street**	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★½	**78**

LOOK AT PAGE 106, NOT HERE! We just gave you a whole page's worth of tips for surviving on the street. And you know what? We got more, but that's for next month.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NHL 2001	EA Sports	★★★★	38
NHL 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	50
NHL 2003	EA Sports	★★★½	63
⚡ NHL 2004	EA Sports	★★★★	73
NHL 2K3	**Sega Sports**	★★★★★	**64**
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	★★★½	43
NHL FaceOff 2003	Sony CEA	★★	64
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	★★★★	51
NHL Hitz 20-03	Midway	★★★★½	62
⚡ NHL Hitz Pro	Midway	★★★★	73
Ninja Assault	Namco	★★½	61
No One Lives Forever	Sierra	★★★½	56
Okage: Shadow King	Sony CEA	★★★	51
Oni	Rockstar	★½	43
Onimusha: Warlords	**Capcom**	★★★★	**43**
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	Capcom	★★★★	60
Orphen: Scion of Sorcery	Activision	★★★	39
Pac-Man Fever	Namco	★★	60
Pac-Man World 2	Namco	★★★★½	54
PaRappa the Rapper 2	Sony CEA	★★★½	53
Paris-Dakar Rally	Acclaim	★★	53
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	EA Games	★★★½	55
Portal Runner	3DO	★★	50
The Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage	Bam	★★	65
Pride FC	THQ	★★★★	65
Primal	Sony CEA	★★★★	68
❾ **Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time**	**Ubisoft**	★★★★★	**75**

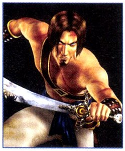
3D POP 1

Start a new game, stay on the balcony and hold L3, then quickly input the following cheat: ⊗, □, △, ○, △, ⊗, □, ○.

BONUS POP 1 LEVEL PASSWORDS

At the Password screen of the bonus *Prince of Persia 1* game, enter the following codes to jump to the corresponding level.

Password	Level
KIEJSC	Level 2
DMKERC	Level 3
ACCVQC	Level 4
XRTLQC	Level 5
UHLCQC	Level 6
RXCTPC	Level 7
KBJOOC	Level 8
DFPJNC	Level 9
SWJJLC	Level 10
LAQEKC	Level 11
ZMBTOC	Level 12



GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Pro Race Driver	Codemasters	★★★★½	65
Project Eden	Eidos	★★★½	52
Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn	TDK Mediactive	★★½	60
P.T.O. IV	Koei	★★★	66
Q-Ball Billiards Master	Take-Two	★★★½	40
Quake III Revolution	EA Games	★★★★½	44
R: Racing Evolution	Namco	★★★★	76
R-Type Final	Eidos/Fresh Games	★★★★	78
Rally Fusion: Race of Champions	Activision	★★★	64

CASINO ROYALE
Bond's very first mission? Outgamble his opponent. Read it yourself!

JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

How to survive being an online agent

GENERAL GAMEPLAY

Being a smart player in the multiplayer environment is crucial to your success. Here are some tips that will allow you to refine your skills:

1) Bond sense
Unlike Bond, the team members don't have the ability to freeze time and target enemies with Bond sense. You'll have to do your best to look up and around for targets while playing through a mission.

2) Two-person cover and advance
A classic tactical-combat move. One person advances quickly toward the nearest hiding point ahead while the other offers cover fire and scans for enemies. This leapfrogging action will help you avoid being ambushed and let you remain protected as much as possible when exploring new areas.

3) When an armor vest is found
Note its location for later use or save it for the team member with lower health.

4) The GPS radar is useful but not perfect
Enemies on a level above or below you will show up on radar, so you have to interpret the red blips properly. Also, the radar sometimes allows you to see enemies behind a door or window before it opens, so take cover and watch that door or window if you suspect an ambush.

5) To boost your score and accuracy
Use one-shot weapons such as shotguns and the Golden Eagle to boost ammo efficiency. To boost accuracy, wait for your autoaim crosshairs to turn red—this indicates that a foe is in close range, so your shots will be more accurate. Nothing beats the satisfaction of taking down an enemy with a single shot.

6) Unlimited lives
While playing through a chapter or individual mission, your team has a limited number of lives—if you run out early, you won't be able to complete the chapter! Your best bet is to restart from scratch and try to preserve as many lives as possible—this is most vital for the final Egypt chapter missions.

7) To earn more nonweapon dispatches
Shoot an enemy to stun him, then punch him out.

8) Use both halves of the screen
Although it may be confusing, it's vital at times for one team member to adjust his camera angle so that the other team member can see what's going on. This is useful in stealth missions when one team member hidden from view wants to know when the coast is clear. The other team member can act as a spotter—and both players can watch that screen to know when to act.

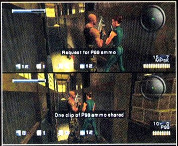
COMBAT TIPS

Obviously, how well you handle yourself in combat will have a huge impact on your multiplayer success. Here are some bits of advice:

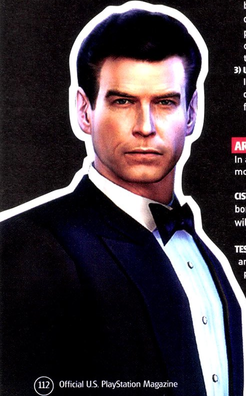
1) Friendly fire
Although you cannot autoaim at another player (except in scramble mode), your bullets will damage a team member if they hit him or her during a cross fire.

2) Share ammunition
When one player is low on ammo, team members can meet to share ammunition. To do so, stand next to each other—the team member needing ammo should press the Action button to initiate a request, which the other team member can accept by pressing the Action button. You can choose to ignore a request if you wish to be greedy.

3) Use stealth whenever possible
In some missions, however, avoiding detection will prevent reinforcements from arriving, and since armor vests are few and far between in these missions, health preservation is a vital part of completing chapters without difficulty.



Share ammo with teammates.



ARENA MODE

In arena mode, two to four players battle each other, and the player who scores the most wins. Here's a quick description of each of the extra levels:

CISTERN This underground arena features switches that trigger lasers and a carpet bomb of the entire lower and upper levels. Avoid the large wall fan on the right—it will seriously put the hurt on you.

TEST LAB This multitiered arena is a laboratory that features a gas chamber. Inside is an armor vest and an AT-420 rocket launcher—however, there's a switch that enemy players can press to trap you inside. Elevators will transport you from level to level, and various switches trigger carpet bombs on the upper and lower levels.

BURN CHAMBER This arena features Jaws, who randomly wanders the arena, looking for players to hurt. He can't be hurt himself, so it's best to stay clear of him. Look for AT-420s to spawn on the right side and then pick up the armor vests on the outside ring—but watch out for switches that trigger bolts of electricity from the ceiling.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Ratchet & Clank	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**63**
Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**75**
Rayman 2: Revolution	**Ubisoft**	★★★★★	**41**
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc	Ubisoft	★★★½	67
Rayman Arena	Ubisoft	★★★½	57
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim	★★½	41
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2	Midway	★★★★	40
Real Pool	Infogrames	★★★½	40
Red Card Soccer 20-03	Midway	★★★	57
Red Faction	**THQ**	★★★★★	**46**
Red Faction II	THQ	★★★★	63
Reel Fishing III	Natsume	★★★★	72
Reign of Fire	Bam	★★★½	63
Resident Evil—Code: Veronica X	**Capcom**	★★★★½	**48**
Resident Evil: Dead Aim	Capcom	★★★½	70
Return to Castle Wolfenstein: OR	Activision	★★★½	71
Rez	Sega	★★★★½	53
Ridge Racer V	Namco	★★★★½	38
Riding Spirits	Bam	★★★½	61
Ring of Red	Konami	★★★★	43
Rise to Honor	Sony CEA	★★★	78
⚡ Risk: Global Domination	Atari	★★★★	73
RLH: Run Like Hell	Interplay	★★★	62
Road Kill	Midway	★★★★	74
Road Trip	Conspiracy	★★★★	61
Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown	Capcom	★★½	74
Rocky	Ubisoft	★★★★	64
Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	★★★★	63
Robotech: Battlecry	TDK	★★★½	62
Rogue Ops	Kemco	★★½	75
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII	Koei	★★½	60
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII	Koei	★★★	73
RPG Maker 2	Agetec	★★★½	74
RTX Red Rock	LucasArts	★★	71
Rugby	EA Sports	★★★½	48
Rugby 2004	EA Sports	★★★	73
Rumble Racing	EA Games	★★★★½	45
Rune: Viking Warlord	Take-Two	★★½	48
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	★★★★½	64
Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	★★½	55
Savage Skies	Bam	★★★	56
Scooby-Doo: Night of 100 Frights	THQ	★★★	58
The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian	Universal	★★	62
Secret Weapons Over Normandy	LucasArts	★★★★	75
Seek and Destroy	Conspiracy	★★★½	66
Sega Bass Fishing Duel	Sega	★★★	62
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega Sports	★★	62
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega Sports	★★★★½	60
Shadow Hearts	Midway	★★★★	52
Shadow of Destiny	Konami	★★★½	43
Shadow Man: 2econd Coming	Acclaim	★★	57
Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	★★½	52
Shifters	3DO	★	58
Shinobi	Sega	★★★½	63
Shox	EA Sports Big	★★★½	63
Shrek Super Party	TDK Mediactive	★★½	64
Silent Hill 2	**Konami**	★★★★½	**50**
Silent Hill 3	Konami	★★★★½	71
Silent Line: Armored Core	Agetec	★★★½	70
Silent Scope	Konami	★★★	39
Silent Scope 2	Konami	★★★½	49
Silent Scope 3	Konami	★★★½	62
Silpheed: The Lost Planet	Working Designs	★★★½	40
The Simpsons: Hit & Run	Vivendi Universal	★★★★	72
The Simpsons: Road Rage	**EA Games**	★★★	**52**
The Simpsons Skateboarding	EA Games	★½	64
The Sims	EA Games	★★★★	65
⓯ ⚡ **The Sims: Bustin' Out**	**EA Games**	★★★★½	**76**

GNOMISH CHEATS

Stand next to the mailbox and key in these bad boys for some cheating fun!

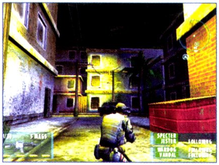
Code	Effect
L2, R1, ⬅, ◎, ⬆	Fills all motives
L1, L2, ➡, ◎, L3	Gives money

1962 The year that JFK formed the Navy SEALs, which serve as a maritime counterpart to the Army's Green Berets.

http://www.usdoj.gov/dea/ The website of Max Payne's former place of employment.

GAME		PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
R2, L1, R1, L2, ←, ◎	Summons a blue gnome that will help you in your career			
R2, R3, L3, L2, R1, L1	Unlocks all locations			
L2, R2, ↑, △, L3.	Unlocks all objects			
L1, R1, ↓, ⊗, L3, R3	Unlocks all social options			

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Sky Gunner	Atlus	★★★½	58
Sky Odyssey	Activision	★★★	40
Sled Storm	EA Big	★★★½	55
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**62**
Smash Cars	Metro3D	★★★½	71
Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament	Namco	★★★½	56
Smuggler's Run	**Rockstar**	★★★★½	**39**
Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory	Rockstar	★★★★½	52
Soccer America: International Cup	Hot-B	★★	48
Soccer Mania	EA/Lego	★★★½	59
⚡SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**60**
❻ **⚡SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs**	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**75**



UNLOCKABLE CHARACTERS

Finish the single-player missions on the required difficulty to unlock the character for online games:

Character	Finish mission/difficulty to unlock
PIUS PLATZ	Operation Rapid Kill at Lieutenant
ALGERIAN OFFICER	Operation Keeping Faith at Lieutenant
VALESKA LUKANOVA	Operation Stormcloud at Lieutenant
SABRE	Operation Rapid Kill at Commander
QUIXADA CHRISTO	Operation Good Neighbors at Commander
REAVER	Operation Keeping Faith at Commander
FLATFOOT	Operation Stormcloud at Commander
FERAL	Complete all missions at Admiral rank

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Soldier of Fortune	Majesco	★★★	52
Sonic Heroes	Sega	★★	77
Soul Calibur II	**Namco**	★★★★★	**72**
Soul Reaver 2	Eidos	★★★	52
Space Channel 5 Special Edition	Sega	★★★½	75
Space Race	Infogrames	★★½	59
Spawn Armageddon	Namco	★½	76
Speed Kings	Acclaim	★★★★	70
Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy	THQ	★★★½	75
Spider-Man	Activision	★★★★½	57
Splashdown	Infogrames	★★★★	52
Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild	**THQ**	★★★★★	**72**
⓭ **Splinter Cell**	**Ubisoft**	★★★★½	**68**

EASY SNEAKY

Do you keep putting too much pressure on the analog stick? An easy way to always be sneaky is to constantly have your gun or binoculars out, as Sam automatically moves slower when he's brandishing them.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom	THQ	★★★★½	75
SpyHunter	Midway	★★★★½	50
SpyHunter 2	Midway	★★★	76
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	Vivendi Universal	★★★	64
SSX	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★★	**38**
SSX Tricky	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★★	**52**
⚡SSX 3	**EA Sports Big**	★★★★★	**74**
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TDK	★★	75
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	Majesco	★★½	53
Star Wars Bounty Hunter	LucasArts	★★★	64
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	★★★	65
Star Wars Super Bombad Racing	LucasArts	★★	45
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts	★★★½	56
Star Wars Racer Revenge	LucasArts	★★★★½	55

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Star Wars Starfighter	**LucasArts**	★★★★½	**43**
Starsky & Hutch	Gotham Games	★★	74
State of Emergency	Rockstar	★★★	55
Stitch: Experiment 626	Sony CEA	★★½	59
Street Fighter EX 3	Capcom	★★★½	39
Street Hoops	Activision	★★★½	60
Stretch Panic	Conspiracy	★★★½	47
Stuntman	Infogrames/Atari	★★★	59
Sub Rebellion	Metro 3D	★★★★	62
Suikoden III	Konami	★★★	63
Summer Heat Beach Volleyball	Acclaim	★★★½	72
Summoner	THQ	★★★	39
Summoner 2	THQ	★★★½	62
Sunny Garcia Surfing	Ubisoft	★★★½	51
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	★★★	41
Super Bust-A-Move 2	Ubisoft	★★★½	63
Super Trucks Racing	XS Games	★½	76
Supercar Street Challenge	Activision	★★½	52
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	Atari	★★★½	63
Surfing H30	Rockstar	★★	40
SWAT: Global Strike Team	Sierra	★★★	74
Swing Away Golf	EA Games	★★★	38
Tak and the Power of Juju	THQ	★★★½	75
Tarzan: Untamed	Ubisoft	★★★½	52
Taz: Wanted	Infogrames	★★★½	60
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Konami	★★½	75
Tekken 4	Namco	★★★½	61
Tekken Tag Tournament	**Namco**	★★★★½	**39**
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	★★★	67
The Terminator: Dawn of Fate	Atari	★★½	63
Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines	Atari	★½	77
Test Drive	Infogrames	★★★½	58
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open	Infogrames	★★★	48
Tetris Worlds	THQ	★★	57
Theme Park Roller Coaster	EA Games	★★★★	41
The Thing	Universal	★★★	62
Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix	Eidos	★½	52
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports	★★★	44
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	EA Sports	★★★★	55
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	EA Sports	★★★★½	63
⚡Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**73**
Time Crisis 2	Namco	★★★★	49
Time Crisis 3	Namco	★★★★½	74
TimeSplitters	**Eidos**	★★★★★	**39**
TimeSplitters 2	**Eidos**	★★★★★	**63**
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3	Crave	★★	76
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	★★½	45
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	★★★½	65
Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness	Eidos	★★	72
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	**Activision**	★★★★★	**51**
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	**Activision**	★★★★★	**63**
⚡Tony Hawk's Underground	**Activision**	★★★★★	**76**
Top Angler	Xicat	★★★½	57
Top Gear Dare Devil	Kemco	★★★½	41
Top Gun: Combat Zones	Titus	★★★	50
Total Immersion Racing	Empire	★	66
Transworld Surf	Infogrames	★★★½	57
⚡Tribes: Aerial Assault	Sierra	★★★½	62
Triple Play 2002	EA Sports	★★	55
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	★★	45
⓬ **True Crime: Streets of L.A.**	**Activision**	★★	**76**

Just enter these while on the Pause menu for the intended effect.

Code	Effect
←, →, ←, →, ⊗	All driving upgrades unlocked
↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ⊗	All fighting moves unlocked
→, ←, →, ←, ⊗	All gunplay skills unlocked
↓, ↓, ↓, ⊗	Bigger car (must be in car before you enter the code on the Pause menu)
↑, →, ↓, ←, ↑, ⊗	Impound garage cars unlocked
⊗, ◎, □, △	Shows Nick Kang's current location

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Tsugunai: Atonement	Atlus	★★★	53
Turok: Evolution	Acclaim	★½	62
Twisted Metal: Black	**SCEA**	★★★★★	**47**
⚡Twisted Metal: Black Online	SCEA	★★★★	61

REPLAY FORUM

FFX (NOT FFX-2!)

I have a cheat (kinda) for *Final Fantasy X*. I call it Aeon Cure.

Don't bother teaching Cure, Cura, and Curaga to your aeons—simply use their element on them.

Examples below:
Ifrit = Fire
Shiva = Blizzard
Ixion = Thunder

Brett Hamilton
hambone1991@hotmail.com

MAX PAYNE 2

Do you wise folks at *OPM* happen to know any cheats for *Max Payne 2*? Or if you don't, could you ask someone for me?

Charles Otter
Berkeley, CA

Well, look what we did just for you, Mr. Otter. We called up our buddies at Rockstar and said, "Our dear reader Charles Otter needs some *Max Payne 2* codes, stat! And tell us what the next *GTA* game is going to be while you're at it!" Unfortunately, they pretended to not hear the second sentence, but they did promptly send us a neat code, saying "For Charles Otter, courtesy of Rockstar."

During gameplay, key in the following:

□, □, □, ⊗, ←, →, ←, →, □, □, □, ⊗, ←, →, ←, →

Return to the Main menu, and under New Game, you'll find that all the modes are unlocked.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	EA Games	★★★	62
UFC Throwdown	Infogrames	★★★½	58
Unison	Tecmo	★★★½	44
Unlimited Saga	Square Enix	★★	70
Unreal Tournament	Infogrames	★★½	40
V-Rally 3	Infogrames	★★★★½	64
Vampire Night	Namco	★★½	52
Vexx	Acclaim	★★	67
Victorious Boxers	Empire	★★★½	51
Virtua Fighter 4	**Sega**	★★★★★	**55**
Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution	**Sega**	★★★★★	**72**
Virtual on Marz	Sega	★★	76
Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision	★★★★½	70
Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo	Bam	★★★	74
War Jetz	3DO	★★½	48
War of the Monsters	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**64**
⚡Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior	THQ	★★½	74
Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO	★★½	44
Wave Rally	Eidos	★½	53
Way of the Samurai	Bam	★★★½	59
Wheel of Fortune	Atari	★★½	76
Whiplash	Eidos	★★★½	76
Whirl Tour	Vivendi Universal	★★	63
Whiteout	Konami	★	65
Wild Arms 3	Sony CEA	★★★½	62
Wild Wild Racing	Interplay	★★★	39
Winback	Koei	★★★★	43
Winning Eleven 7	**Konami**	★★★★★	**78**
Wipeout Fusion	Bam	★★★★½	57
Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land	Atlus	★★★	53
Woody Woodpecker: Buzz Buzzard Park	Dreamcatcher	★★★	57
⚡World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco	★★★½	76
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3DO	★★★	42
World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	★★★★	55
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega Sports	★★★★	67
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6 Int'l	**Konami**	★★★★★	**67**
World Tour Soccer 2002	Sony CEA	★★★★	53
World Tour Soccer 2003	Sony CEA	★★★★	65
Wrath Unleashed	LucasArts	★½	78
WRC: World Rally Championship	**Bam**	★★★★★	**57**
Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions	Activision	★★	63
WTA Tour Tennis	Konami	★	57
WWE Crush Hour	THQ	★★½	68
WWE SmackDown!: Here Comes the Pain	THQ	★★★½	76
WWE SmackDown!: Shut Your Mouth	THQ	★★½	64
WWF SmackDown!: Just Bring It	**THQ**	★★★½	**52**
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	★★★★½	64
X Squad	EA Games	★★★½	38
X2: Wolverine's Revenge	Activision	★★★	69
Xenosaga: Episode 1—Der Wille Zur Macht	Namco	★★★★	66
XGRA: Extreme-G Racing Association	Acclaim	★★★★½	74
⚡XIII	Ubisoft	★★★½	75
Yanya Caballista: City Skater	Koei	★★★½	49
Yu-Gi-Oh!: The Duelists of the Roses	Konami	★★½	67
Zapper	Infogrames	★★½	64
Z.O.E: Zone of the Enders	Konami	★★★★½	44
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner	Konami	★★★★½	68

PS1 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
007 Racing	EA Games	★★★	41
3Xtreme	989 Studios	★	21
40 Winks	GT Interactive	★★★★	28
102 Dalmatians: Puppies to the Rescue	Eidos	★★★½	41
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	★★★★	58
A Bug's Life	**Sony CEA**	★★	**15**
Ace Combat 2	**Namco**	★★★★★	**1**
Ace Combat 3: Electrosphere	Namco	★★★	31
Aces of the Air	Agetec	½	64
Action Bass	Take-Two	★★	37
Action Man: Operation Extreme	Hasbro	★★★	41
Air Hockey	Mud Duck	★★★½	70

900 The degrees of rotation in the steering wheel in your car—and in the Driving Force Pro.

Driving Force Pro

This monster adds a shifter and a full 900 degrees of rotation to the amazing Driving Force. It's pricey, but no other wheel comes close.

- BEST WHEEL
- Logitech
- $149.99

★★★★★

TOP GEAR

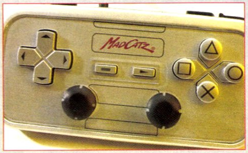
Let's face it: Lots of peripherals out on the market are, ah, *questionable* in their quality. Don't you wish someone would just tell you the best option in each category and save you all the hassle? We did, too...but then we realized that we'd have to do it ourselves. So here's our roundup of the very best of the best. (And in cases where the best of the best is a bit expensive, we also offer a cheaper option.) Now go shop.

DualShock 2

Yep, this is still the sturdiest, most comfortable PS2 controller on the market. Now if only they'd start making a wireless version....

- BEST PAD
- Sony CEA
- $19.99

★★★★★

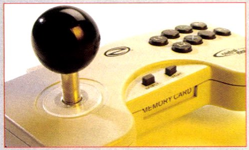


RetroCON

We know most of you don't expect your controllers to be fashionable, but *damn* is this thing cool—and a lot more comfortable than it looks.

- COOLEST PAD
- MadCatz
- $24.99

★★★★

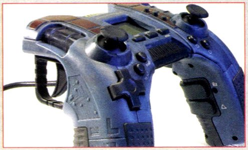


Control Element

The Control Element's innovative construction turns your PS1 into an all-in-one portable gaming powerhouse. Plus it's supercheap!

- BEST PS1 PAD
- Gemini
- $12.99

★★★★



FPS Master

Yes, it looks ridiculous, but once you get the hang of the layout, you will be fragging your friends like you've never fragged before.

- BEST FPS PAD
- Gamester
- $29.99

★★★½

Photos by Michael Sexton

INDESTRUCTIBLE

We once drove a Volvo over the Shadowblade Arcade Stick. It worked perfectly afterward.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

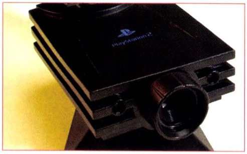
The NetPlay separates so that you can use just the USB keyboard if you so desire. Logitech also sells the keyboard by itself for $29.95.

Cordless Controller

Hair-trigger response and a supremely comfortable design make this a standout—if only the D-pad weren't quite so sensitive!

- BEST WIRELESS
- Logitech
- $59.99

★★★★★



Eye Toy

We still have yet to see the full measure of the Eye Toy's hands-off genius, but mark our words: This will revolutionize gaming forever.

- BEST INVENTION
- Sony CEA
- $49.99

★★★★½

NetPlay Controller

If you plan to play a lot of *FFXI*, this is all but a necessity. Both keyboard and controller are surprisingly comfortable for their size.

- BEST KEYBOARD
- Logitech
- $69.95

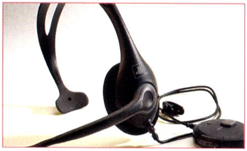
★★★★★

2.4 GHz Wireless Controller

Not quite as exceptional as the Logitech wireless, but plenty good, especially for about half the price.

- CHEAP WIRELESS
- Hip Gear
- $34.99

★★★★

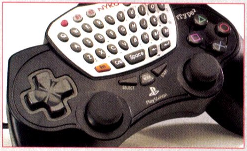


USB Headset

By adding volume and mute controls and seriously beefing up the construction, Sony made a headset worth trading up to.

- BEST HEADSET
- Sony CEA
- $29.99

★★★★

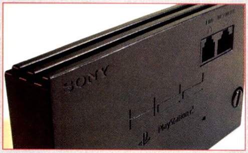


iType2

If you just need a keyboard for the occasional online chat, take a look at this integrated design. It's compact, convenient, and comfortable.

- CHEAP KEYBOARD
- Nyko
- $49.99

★★★★



Network Adaptor

Online play is the future of gaming; anyone who denies it is either a liar or a moron. If you don't have one of these already, get one.

- BEST NO-BRAINER
- Sony CEA
- $39.99

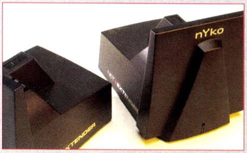
★★★★★

GameShark Media Player

This puppy lets you connect your PS2 to a PC to stream MP3s, videos, and pictures to your TV.

- BEST ODDITY
- MadCatz
- $49.99

★★★★★



Wireless Net Extender

True plug-and-play simplicity make this the ideal solution for anyone whose PS2 is far, far away from their broadband connection.

- BEST NETWORK
- Nyko
- $99.99

★★★★½

7.0 TFT Universal Game Screen

Hands down the best LCD product we've seen. It's a bit pricey, but the crisp display makes it worth it.

- BEST SCREEN
- MadCatz
- $199.99

★★★½

Shadowblade Arcade Stick

InterAct is no more, so this may be hard to find, but you won't find a better fighting stick anywhere.

- BEST ARCADE
- InterAct
- $24.99

★★★★★

Blaster

A smooth, comfortable, joystick-style D-pad on the back of this baby makes it a more than adequate stand-in for the GunCon 2.

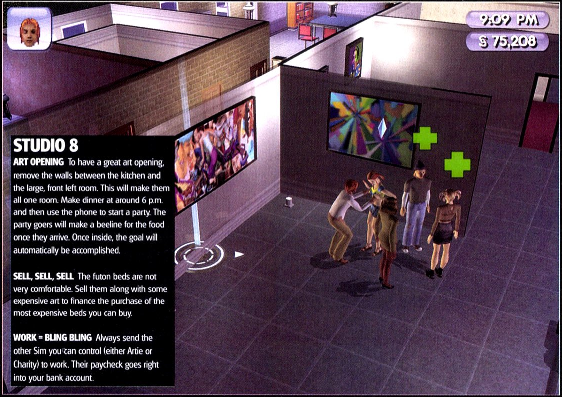
- BEST GUN
- MadCatz
- $34.99

★★★★

THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT

We bust out with some quick hints

So you just popped your disc in and you're busy mismanaging your Sim's sad little life. Well, when you're done getting yourself killed in the toilet at Mom's house, and you feel like actually progressing in the Get-A-Life mode, then here are some quick hints straight from Maxis on, well, getting a life.



STUDIO 8

ART OPENING To have a great art opening, remove the walls between the kitchen and the large, front left room. This will make them all one room. Make dinner at around 6 p.m. and then use the phone to start a party. The party goers will make a beeline for the food once they arrive. Once inside, the goal will automatically be accomplished.

SELL, SELL, SELL The futon beds are not very comfortable. Sell them along with some expensive art to finance the purchase of the most expensive beds you can buy.

WORK = BLING BLING Always send the other Sim you can control (either Artie or Charity) to work. Their paycheck goes right into your bank account.

MIMI'S HOUSE

HOP ON THE BUS No matter what career you are in or what time your bus for work is scheduled to come, a bus will automatically come for you after a couple of hours. Always take this bus, as your Sim will be in a good mood and will automatically get the first promotion in any career.

UNLOCK REPAIRMAN After your Sim has two mechanical skill points (use the bookshelf), repair the broken espresso machine. This will unlock the repairman, which you will be able to hire in any house later in the game to fix broken objects.

BUG ZAPPER Buy a bug zapper and place it next to the hot tub. When you mood is too low for a promotion or skill building, zap your Sim until their energy is 100 percent full, and then put them in the hot tub until most of their Mood meters are green.

DUDLEY'S HOUSE

12:29 PM
$ 75,228

MAKE FRIENDS WITH DUDLEY This will accomplish several goals and give you a secret unlockable. This will also give you an additional friend, and you will need many friends to get to the top of your career ladder.

MAINTAIN THE HOUSE Immediately call the maid and the gardener. The maid will clean up the house for you and the gardener will keep the outdoor plants healthy. When the maid cleans up the entire house, she will even complete the clean-up goal for you!

PROMOTION The first promotion will unlock a new location to visit based on your Sim's career. This location will contain a special advanced skill object that builds the skill required for the next career promotion. After coming home from work the first day, immediately visit the new location and build the required skill points. Then simply take the next bus to work in a good mood, and a promotion is virtually assured within one day.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Akuji the Heartless	Crystal Dynamics	●●●	18
Aladdin in Nasira's Revenge	Sony CEA	●●	45
Alexi Lalas International Soccer	Rockstar	●	23
Alien Resurrection	Fox Interactive	●●●	38
All-Star Racing 2	Mud Duck	●●●	71
All-Star Slammin' D-Ball	Agetec	●●◐	56
Alone in the Dark: The New Nightmare	Infogrames	●●●●	47
Alundra	Working Designs	●●●●◐	4
Alundra 2	Activision	●●●	32
The Amazing Virtual Sea-Monkeys	Conspiracy	●◐	66
American Pool	Mud Duck	●	71
Animaniacs Ten Pin Alley	ASC	●●●	17
Animorphs: Shattered Reality	Infogrames	●●◐	37
Ape Escape	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**22**
Apocalypse	Activision	●●●	16
Arc the Lad Collection	Working Designs	●●●●	52
Arcade Party Pak	Midway	●●●◐	28
Arcade's Greatest Hits: Atari Collection 2	Midway	●●◐	7
Arcade's Greatest Hits: Midway Collection 2	Midway	●●	4
Armored Core	Sony CEA	●●●◐	3
Armored Core: Master of Arena	Agetec	●●◐	31
Armorines: Project S.W.A.R.M.	Acclaim	◐	35
Army Men 3D	**3DO**	●●●	**20**
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	●●●●	27
Army Men: Air Attack 2	3DO	●●●◐	39
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	●◐	47
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes	3DO	●●	32
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	●●◐	40
Army Men: World War	3DO	●◐	34
Army Men: World War—Final Front	3DO	●◐	45
Army Men: World War—Land, Sea, Air	3DO	●◐	39
Arthur! Ready to Race	The Learning Co.	●	42
Assault	Midway	●●●	15
Asteroids	**Activision**	●●●◐	**16**
Atari Anniversary Edition Redux	Infogrames	●●	53
Atlantis: The Lost Empire	Sony CEA	●●●●	48
ATV: Quad Power Racing	Acclaim	●	39
ATV Mania	Gotham Games	●●●●	73
Austin Powers Pinball	Gotham Games	●●	64
Auto Destruct	Electronic Arts	●●●	6
Azure Dreams	Konami	●●●	10
Backstreet Billiards	Ascii	●●●◐	15
Ball Breakers	Take-Two	●●●◐	36
Ballistic	Infogrames	●●●●	27
Baseball 2000	Interplay	●●	21
Bass Landing	Agetec	●●●◐	26
Bass Rise	Bandai	●●●	28
Batman & Robin	Acclaim	●	13
Batman Beyond: Return of the Joker	Ubisoft	◐	39
Batman: Gotham City Racer	Ubisoft	●◐	46
Battle Hunter	Agetec	●◐	48
Battletanx: Global Assault	3DO	●◐	31
Beast Wars	Hasbro	●◐	5
Beyblade	Crave	●◐	66
Big Air	Accolade	●◐	20
Big Bass Fishing	Take-Two	◐	58
Big League Slugger Baseball	Agetec	●◐	74
Big Ol' Bass 2	Konami	●●◐	45
Big Strike Bowling	Gotham Games	●●●◐	68
Billiards	Agetec	●●◐	45
Bio F.R.E.A.K.S.	Midway	●●	10
Black Bass with Blue Marlin	Hot-B	●●	29
Blade	Activision	●●◐	41
Blast Lacrosse	Acclaim	●●◐	48
Blast Radius	Psygnosis	●●●◐	19
Blaster Master: Blasting Again	Crave	●●●	38
Blasto	Sony CEA	●●●◐	8
Blockids	Natsume	●●◐	69
Bloody Roar	Sony CEA	●●●◐	6
Bloody Roar 2	Sony CEA	●●●●	21
Blues Big Musical	THQ	●●●	46
Board Game: Top Shop	Agetec	●●●●	45
Bomberman Fantasy Race	Atlus	●●◐	19
Bomberman Party Edition	Vatical	●●◐	38

OH MY GOD! LEMURS!
They're not apes, but they're cool primates nonetheless.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Bomberman World	Atlus	★★½	13
The Bombing Islands	Kemco	★★½	47
Boombots	SouthPeak	★★½	27
Bottom of the 9th '97	Konami	★★★½	1
Bowling	Agetec	★★	43
Boxing	Agetec	★★★	45
Bratz	Ubisoft	n/a	n/a
Brave Fencer Musashi	Square EA	★★★★	15
Bravo Air Race	THQ	★★★	1
Breakout	Hasbro	★★	39
Breath of Fire III	Capcom	★★★½	9
Breath of Fire IV	Capcom	★★★½	40
Brigandine	Atlus	★★★½	15
Broken Sword	THQ	★★★★	5
Broken Sword II	Crave	★★★½	27
Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling	THQ	★★★½	13
Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling 2	THQ	★★★★	31
Bug Riders	GT Interactive	★★	3
Bugs Bunny & Taz: Time Busters	Infogrames	★★★	41
Bugs Bunny: Lost In Time	Infogrames	★★★½	23
Builder's Block	Jaleco	★★★½	35
Burstrick Wake Boarding!!	Natsume	★½	45
Bushido Blade 2	Square EA	★★★½	14
Bust A Groove	989 Studios	★★★★	16
Bust A Groove 2	Enix	★★★	36
Bust-A-Move 4	Natsume	★★★★	17
Bust-A-Move 99	Acclaim	★★	19
Buzz Lightyear of Star Command	Activision	★★½	39
C: The Contra Adventure	Konami	★½	12
c-12: Final Resistance	Sony CEA	★★½	58
Caesar's Palace 2000	Interplay	½	41
Caesar's Palace II	Interplay	★★	15
Capcom vs. SNK Pro	Capcom	★★★½	60
Card Games	Agetec	★½	50
Cardinal SYN	Sony CEA	★★★	9
CART World Series	Sony CEA	★★★½	3
Casper: Friends Around the World	Sound Source	★½	41
Castlevania Chronicles	Konami	★★★½	50
Castlevania: Symphony of the Night	**Konami**	★★★★★	**2**
Castrol Honda Superbike	Electronic Arts	★★	21
Centipede	Hasbro	★	22
Championship Bass	EA Sports	★★★★	33
Championship Motocross 2001 Feat. Ricky Carmichael	THQ	★★★	41
Championship Motocross Feat. Ricky Carmichael	THQ	★★★½	25
Championship Surfer	Mattel	★★★	41
Chessmaster II	Mindscape	★★★½	23
Chicken Run	Eidos	★★★	41
Chocobo Racing	Square EA	★★★	23
Chocobo's Dungeon 2	Square EA	★★½	29
Chrono Cross	**Square EA**	★★★★★	**36**
Circuit Breakers	Mindscape	★★★	12
Civilization II	Activision	★★★★½	18
Cleopatra's Fortune	Mud Duck	★★½	71
Clock Tower	Ascii	★★★	2
Clock Tower II: The Struggle Within	Agetec	★★½	28
Colin McRae Rally 2.0	**Codemasters**	★★★★★	**40**
Colin McRae Rally	Sony CEA	★★★★	30
Colony Wars	**Psygnosis**	★★★★★	**4**
Colony Wars: Red Sun	Psygnosis	★★★★½	31
Colony Wars: Vengeance	Psygnosis	★★★½	14
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	Virgin	★★★½	4
Contender	Sony CEA	★★★★	17
Contender 2	Bam	★	41
Cool Boarders 2	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**3**
Cool Boarders 3	**989 Studios**	★★★	**14**
Cool Boarders 4	**989 Studios**	★★★	**27**
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	★	39
Countdown Vampires	Bandai	★½	32
Covert Ops: Nuclear Dawn	Activision	★★½	34
Crash Bandicoot 2	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**3**
Crash Bandicoot: WARPED	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**15**
Crash Bash	SCEA/Universal	★★½	39
Crime Killer	Interplay	★★★	12
Critical Depth	GT Interactive	★★★	3

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Croc	**Fox Interactive**	★★★★	**1**
Croc 2	Fox Interactive	★★½	22
Crossroad Crisis	Agetec	★½	50
Crusaders of Might & Magic	3DO	★★★	30
CTR: Crash Team Racing	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**26**
CyberTiger	EA Sports	★★★★	27
Dance Dance Revolution	Konami	★★★★	42
Dance Dance Revolution: Disney Mix	Konami	★★★★	49
Dance Dance Revolution: Konamix	Konami	★★★★	57
Danger Girl	THQ	★★½	39
Dark Omen	Electronic Arts	★★	9
DarkStalkers 3	Capcom	★★★★	16
Darkstone	Take-Two	★★★½	43
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX	Acclaim	★★★½	38
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX: Maximum Remix	Acclaim	★★½	47
David Beckham Soccer	Majesco	★★★	61
Dead in the Water	ASC	★★½	17
Dead or Alive	Tecmo	★★★★½	8
Deathtrap Dungeon	Eidos	★★½	9
Deception III: Dark Delusion	Tecmo	★★★★	31
Delta Force: Urban Warfare	Novalogic	★★★	61
Demolition Racer	Infogrames	★★★★	26
Destrega	Koei	★★★★	16
Destruction Derby Raw	Midway	★★★★	39
Devil Dice	THQ	★★★½	13
Dexter's Laboratory: Mandark's Lab?	Bam	★★★½	59
Diablo	Electronic Arts	★★★★	8
Die Hard Trilogy: Viva Las Vegas	Fox Interactive	★★	31
Digimon Digital Card Battle	Bandai	★★★	48
Digimon Rumble Arena	Bandai	★★★½	55
Digimon World	Bandai	★½	36
Digimon World 2	Bandai	★★	46
Digimon World 3	Bandai	★★½	57
Dino Crisis	Capcom	★★★★	25
Dino Crisis 2	Capcom	★★★★½	38
Dirt Jockey	Mastiff	★★	71
Disney's Dinosaur	Ubisoft	★½	36
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	★★½	64
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubisoft	★★★	39
Downhill Mountain Bike Racing	Activision	★★½	27
Dracula: The Last Sanctuary	Dreamcatcher	★★½	56
Dracula: The Resurrection	Dreamcatcher	★★½	48
Dragon Ball GT	Bandai	★★	4
Dragon Ball Z: Ultimate Battle 22	Infogrames	★	69
Dragon Tales: Dragon Seek	NewKidCo	★½	45
Dragon Valor	Namco	★★★	38
Dragon Warrior VII	Enix	★★★★½	51
Dragonseeds	Jaleco	★★	15
Driver	**GT Interactive**	★★★★	**24**
Driver 2	Infogrames	★★★★	40
Ducati World Championship Racing	Acclaim	★★½	41
Duke Nukem: Land of the Babes	Infogrames	★★½	40
Duke Nukem: Time to Kill	**GT Interactive**	★★★½	**14**
Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown	GT Interactive	★★★	5
Dukes of Hazzard	**SouthPeak**	★½	**29**
Dukes of Hazzard II: Daisy Dukes It Out	SouthPeak	★★	41
Dune 2000	Electronic Arts	★½	27
EA Sports Supercross	EA Sports	★★★½	41
Eagle One: Harrier Attack	Infogrames	★★★	32
Echo Night	Agetec	★★★	23
ECW Anarchy Rulz	Acclaim	★	38
ECW Hardcore Revolution	Acclaim	★½	30
Ehrgeiz	Square EA	★★★½	21
Einhänder	Sony CEA	★★★★	8
Elemental Gearbolt	Working Designs	★★★★	11
Eliminator	Psygnosis	★½	20
❹ **Elmo's Numbers & Letters**	**NewKidCo**	**n/a**	**n/a**

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE Here's the order of numbers and letters to help you out: 0123456789 and ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
The Emperor's New Groove	Sony CEA	★★★½	40
Equestrian Showcase	Mud Duck	★★	71
ESPN MLS GameNight	Konami	★★★	40
E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial: Interplanetary Mission	NewKidCo	½	54
Eternal Eyes	Crave	★½	38

REPLAY FORUM

APE ESCAPE 2

I figured out this really cool trick for *Ape Escape 2*. If you go to Casino City after you beat it, you can reenter the level and smash all the slot machines with your stun club. After they are all gone, go to the top floor and enter the area that looks like a circus tent. Then reenter the main room and all the slot machines will be back. You can get 999 coins in about 10 minutes.

Jason Janicki
Nightmare588
@aol.com

JAK II

Hello guys (and gal) at *OPM*! I don't quite agree with Gary's *Jak II* review, but I respect his opinion. It does get kinda hard, and I was wondering if you had any tips for scoring points in the hoverboard races.

John Bishop
San Francisco, CA

Well, since you still like Gary, we'll give you a cool slice of hoverboard trickery. Here's a list of good point-scoring tricks that'll make you rock:

NOSE FLIP: ⊗+↑+L1

METHOD: ⊗+↓+L1

KICK FLIP: ⊗+←+L1

BOARD SPIN: ⊗+→+L1

FRONT FLIP: ⊗+↑+R1

BACK FLIP: ⊗+↓+R1

CLOCKWISE SPIN: ⊗+→+R1

CCW SPIN: ⊗+←+R1

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Evil Dead: Hail to the King	THQ	★★½	41
Evil Zone	Titus	★★★	25
Expendable	Infogrames	★½	34
F1 2000	EA Sports	★★★½	33
F1 Championship Season	EA Sports	★★★½	40
F1 Racing Championship	Ubisoft	★★½	39
Family Feud	Hasbro	★★★	39
Family Game Pack	3DO	★★½	33
Fantastic Four	Acclaim	★★	3
Fatal Fury: Wild Ambition	SNK	★½	30
Fear Effect	Eidos	★★★★½	31
Fear Effect 2: Retro Helix	Eidos	★★★★½	43
Felony 11-79	Ascii	★★★	1
FIFA 98	EA Sports	★★★½	4
FIFA 99	EA Sports	★★★★½	17
FIFA 2000	EA Sports	★★★★½	27
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	★★★★½	39
FIFA Soccer 2003	EA Sports	★★★½	63
The Fifth Element	Activision	½	15
Fighter Maker	Agetec	★★★½	21
Fighting Force	**Eidos**	★★★	**3**
Fighting Force 2	Eidos	★★	29
Final Fantasy Anthology	Square EA	★★★★½	26
Final Fantasy Chronicles	Square EA	★★★★	47
Final Fantasy Origins	Square Enix	★★★½	67
❸ **Final Fantasy Tactics**	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**5**

UNLOCK CLOUD STRIFE

Wait until you're almost at the end of Chapter 4 (or at least until after you battle Zodiac Demon Adramelk in Igros Castle). Give the Cancer Stone to Goug, and Cloud will join your reality, but run off. Then make your way back to Zirghidas Trade City. You'll soon rescue Cloud from some thieves, and you should then go to Bervenia Volcano to retrieve his Materia Blade.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
❶ **Final Fantasy VII**	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**1**

Wow, talk about a blast from the past. Well, you ask, we provide.

FLOG THAT CHICKEN To speed up your chocobo during a chocobo race, hold L1, L2, R1, and R2. To recharge its stamina, hold R1 and R2.

MMM, SPINY! To race a cactuar in the Snowboarding minigame in Gold Saucer, first qualify for each course. Then you'll see a yellow balloon that will let you race in time-attack mode. Race on the beginner course and look for a silver balloon. Grab it, then beat the course in less than 54 seconds. Then go into time-attack mode again, hit Start, go to Options, and select Ghost. The final menu item ("???") is a cactuar ghost.

REVIVE AERIS You CAN'T. Stop asking.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
❺ **Final Fantasy VIII**	**Square EA**	★★★★★	**25**

ALTERNATE SCENE

This happens in the Dollet SeeD mission. After fighting Elvoret, Biggs will send the "Black Widow," or X-ATM092, after you. If you actually kill it (i.e., inflict more than 5,000 HP of damage), you get a different cut-scene at Dollet Beach afterward.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Final Fantasy IX	**Square EA**	★★★★★	**39**
Fisherman's Bait	Konami	★★★½	18
Fisherman's Bait 2: Big Ol' Bass	Konami	★★★	27
Flintstones Bedrock Bowling	SouthPeak	★	37
Ford Truck Mania	Gotham Games	★★	75
Ford Racing	Empire	★★½	44
Formula 1 '98	**Psygnosis**	★★★★	**15**
Formula 1 '99	Psygnosis	★★★½	28
Forsaken	Acclaim	★★★★	10
Fox Sports Golf '99	Fox Interactive	★★	11
Fox Sports Soccer '99	Fox Interactive	★★½	11
Freestyle Boardin' '99	Capcom	★★½	18
Freestyle Motocross: McGrath vs. Pastrana	Acclaim	★★½	40
Frogger	**Hasbro**	★★½	**4**
Frogger 2: Swampy's Revenge	Hasbro	★★★	38
Front Mission 3	Square EA	★★★★½	31
Future Cop: L.A.P.D.	Electronic Arts	★★★	13
G-Police	Psygnosis	★★★★½	3
G-Police 2	Psygnosis	★★★★	25
G-Darius	THQ	★★★★	13
Galaga: Destination Earth	Hasbro	★★½	39
Galerians	Crave	★★★	33
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	★★½	28

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH: REALMS OF EVERQUEST

How to use the skills to pay the bills

The wizard causes damage primarily by the use of spells. He does well with melee weapons but is best used as a spell caster. With so many spells at his fingertips and so few skill points to spend, it is difficult to choose which spells to acquire, which to level up, and which to leave alone. Let us help.

MAKE THEM BOLT

The wizard's first available spells are Bolt of Frost and Bolt of Shock. The Bolt of Frost fires an icy bolt at enemies, slowing them with cold damage. This is best employed early against multiple enemies; fire once to slow them, then follow with melee attacks one at a time, retreating from other approaching enemies to start the process over. When dealing with one enemy at a time, cast Bolt of Shock. It causes a little more damage than Bolt of Frost but does not slow the enemy. At higher levels, both of these moves offer the added bonus of damaging enemies who are near the target. Level these as you see fit.

One of the wizard's more useful moves is the ability to root. The Root spell brings enemies to a halt.

Bolt of Fire is similar to the aforementioned projectile spells but is not available until level 15. This spell causes much more damage, but its effect on other enemies after the initial blast is not as damaging as that of the other bolts.

SUDDEN STORM

While not available right away, Fire Storm and Cold Storm also cause high levels of damage. Cold Storm rains icy shards on all enemies beneath it, while Fire Storm engulfs a target in a wall of flames, also damaging all that come near. Unleash one of these spells to create a wall of damage between you and your enemy. This will cause destruction while also giving you a moment to either run or take advantage of an already suffering enemy with your melee weapon.

SHIELD THYSELF

The wizard's repertoire of moves also includes the ability to cast a mock shield of flames around himself with Fire Flares. This move encircles the spell caster with flames that inflict damage on anything they touch. This spell is most helpful in later levels when enemies are more avidly pursuing the more vulnerable wizard.

CONTINUOUS SPELLS

Continuous spells are unique to the wizard and come in three forms: Wizard Beam, Cone of Frost, and Cone of Fire. These spells will continue for as long as you hold the Activate button or until your mana is depleted. All three of these mighty spells can cause a hefty amount of damage. In the case of Wizard Beam, the damage can spread from enemy to enemy in the form of tendrils. Use these sparingly due to their high mana cost; unleash them when you find yourself backed into a corner or when facing a large enemy you need to vanquish in a hurry.

BIG UP YOUR WEAPONS

The wizard's weapon-enhancing spells are also useful in group play. Cold Weapons, Lightning Weapons, and Fire Weapons are great for assisting your group when it is in a challenging situation by providing a damage boost to normal melee attacks. These spells must be leveled up to skill level 6 to extend to teammates, so it may be worth leveling up only one of the three to avoid wasting points. Fire Weapons will provide the most damage, but it is not available until level 20.

KEEP THEM ROOTED

One of the wizard's more useful moves is the ability to root. The Root spell brings enemies to a halt, which leaves them vulnerable to ranged attacks or provides the wizard with a means of escape. At later levels, this spell can also be cast repeatedly to immobilize more than one enemy at a time. It is worth the points to level up this move so that more than one enemy can be rooted at a time.

KNOW YOUR ROLE

Group Dynamics

- In a group, exclude the wizard from partaking in close combat melee. You can, however, count on the wizard to cast powerful spells from afar. Powerful spells such as Shock of Fire, Wizard Beam, and Root have the best effect on a group; they can be cast from a distance and cause damage to multiple enemies.
- Do not rush into a battle swinging your weapon if there is a melee fighter in the group. As a wizard, stand back and lend a hand with ranged attacks. Another way to contribute is to activate weapon-enhancing spells like Fire Weapons or Cold Weapons. These extend their effects to group members, advancing your overall progress.
- When fighting in a group setting, conserve mana for the times that you most need the wizard's spells. If a group stumbles onto a handful of enemies, there is no need to unleash multiple spells when odds are the barbarian or cleric can clear them out. In this case, stand clear or lend a hand with your weapon without getting yourself into the midst of a major battle.

John likes being the Barbarian, and D likes the Cleric. Who do you play as? Tell us in am email to [illegible].

ROOM 101

This supposedly contains the worst thing in the world, according to George Orwell's *1984*.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Gauntlet Legends	Midway	★★½	32
Gekido	Interplay	★★★	34
Gekioh: Shooting King	Natsume	★★★½	67
Gex: Deep Cover Gecko	Eidos	★★★½	20
Gex: Enter the Gecko	Midway	★★★½	7
Ghost in the Shell	THQ	★★★★	4
Glover	Hasbro	★★	28
Gold and Glory: The Road to El Dorado	Sony CEA	★★	42
Gran Turismo	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**9**
Gran Turismo 2	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**29**
Grand Theft Auto	**Take-Two**	★★½	**10**
Grand Theft Auto 2	Rockstar	★★★	27
Grand Theft Auto: London 1969	Rockstar	★★½	22
Grand Tour Racing '98	Activision	★★★	1
Grandia	Sony CEA	★★★★½	26
Granstream Saga	THQ	★★★	10
The Grinch	Konami/Universal	★½	39
Grind Session	Sony CEA	★★★★	34
Grudge Warriors	Take-Two	★★	34
Guardian's Crusade	Activision	★★★	19
Gubble	Mud Duck	½	68
Gundam Battle Assault 2	Bandai	★★★★	62
Gunfighter: The Legend of Jesse James	Ubisoft	★★½	52
HardBall '99	Accolade	★½	15
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	EA Games	★★★	53
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	★★★	64
Harvest Moon: Back to Nature	Natsume	★★★½	40
HBO Boxing	Acclaim	★★	41
Heart of Darkness	Interplay	★★★★	13
Hellboy: Asylum Seeker	Dreamcatcher	½	73
Hello Kitty's Cube Frenzy	NewKidCo	★★½	20
Herc's Adventures	LucasArts	★★★	2
High Heat Baseball 2000	3DO	★	22
High Heat Major League Baseball 2002	3DO	★★★★	43
Hogs of War	Infogrames	★★★★	38
Hooters Road Trip	Ubisoft	½	55
Hoshigami: Ruining Blue Earth	Atlus	★★½	53
Hot Shots Golf	Sony CEA	★★★★	7
Hot Shots Golf 2	Sony CEA	★★★½	30
Hot Wheels Turbo Racing	**Electronic Arts**	★★½	**25**
Hydro Thunder	Midway	★★	31
IHRA Drag Racing	Bethesda	½	53
In Cold Blood	Dreamcatcher	★★	49
Incredible Crisis	Titus	★★★½	38
Inspector Gadget: Gadget's Crazy Maze	Ubisoft	★★★½	50
Intelligent Qube	Sony CEA	★★★	2
Intellivision Classic Games	Activision	★½	28
Int'l. Superstar Soccer 98	Konami	★★★★½	11
Int'l. Track & Field 2000	Konami	★★★★	27
InuYasha	Bandai	★★★	68
Invasion From Beyond	GT Interactive	★★	19
Iron Soldier 3	Vatical	★★★★	35
Irritating Stick	Jaleco	★★★	18
ISS Pro Evolution	Konami	★★★★½	35
The Italian Job	**Rockstar**	★★★★★	**57**
Jackie Chan Stuntmaster	Midway	★★★½	30
Jade Cocoon	Crave	★★★½	23
Jarrett & LaBonte Stock Car Racing	Codemasters	★★★★	38
Jeopardy!	Hasbro	★★★★	17
Jeopardy! 2	Hasbro	★★★★	29
Jeremy McGrath Supercross 2000	**Acclaim**	★½	**38**
Jersey Devil	Sony CEA	★★	10
Jet Moto 2	**Sony CEA**	★★★½	**3**
Jet Moto 3	989 Studios	★★★½	26
Jigsaw Madness	XS Games	★★	70
Jimmy Johnson VR Football	Interplay	★★	2
Jojo's Bizarre Adventure	Capcom	★★★★½	31
Juggernaut	Jaleco	★★	26
K-1 Grand Prix	Jaleco	★★★½	28
K-1 Revenge	Jaleco	★★½	18
Kagero: Deception II	Tecmo	★★★★½	14
Kartia	Atlus	★★★★	12
Kensei Sacred Fist	Konami	★½	17
Kickboxing	Agetec	★	58
Killer Loop	Crave	★★★	27
King of Fighters 99	Agetec	★★★★	41
KISS Pinball	Take-Two	★½	46
Klonoa	**Namco**	★★★★★	**6**
Knockout Kings	EA Sports	★★★½	16
Knockout Kings 2000	EA Sports	★★★★	27
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	★★★★	39
Konami Arcade Classics	Konami	★★½	23
Koudelka	Infogrames	★★★	35
Kurt Warner's Arena Football Unleashed	Midway	★★★	34
The Land Before Time: Great Valley Racing	TDK Mediactive	★★★	46
The Land Before Time: Return to Great Valley	Sound Source	★★½	39
Largo Winch .//Commando Sar	Ubisoft	½	57
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver	**Eidos**	★★★★½	**25**
The Legend of Dragoon	Sony CEA	★★★★½	34
Legend of Legaia	Sony CEA	★★★★	19
Legend of Mana	Square EA	★★½	35
Lego Island 2: The Brickster's Revenge	Lego Media	★★½	46
Lego Rock Raiders	Lego Media	★	37
Lilo & Stitch	Sony CEA	★★★½	59
The Lion King: Simba's Mighty Adventure	Activision	★½	42
The Little Mermaid II	THQ	★★★★	39
Lode Runner	Natsume	★★½	4
Looney Tunes Racing	Infogrames	★★½	39
Looney Tunes: Sheep Raider	Infogrames	★★½	51
The Lost World: Jurassic Park	**Electronic Arts**	★	**2**
Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete	Working Designs	★★★★½	22
Lunar 2: Eternal Blue Complete	Working Designs	★★★★	40
Madden NFL 98	**EA Sports**	★★★★	**2**
Madden NFL 99	EA Sports	★★★★½	13
Madden NFL 2000	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**25**
Madden NFL 2001	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**37**
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	★★★★½	49
Madden NFL 2003	EA Sports	★★★★	62
Madden NFL 2004	EA Sports	★★★★	74
Marble Master	Conspiracy	★★½	69
Martian Gothic: Unification	Take-Two	★★★½	52
Marvel Super Heroes	Capcom	★★	2
Marvel Super Heroes vs. Street Fighter	Capcom	★★★½	18
Marvel vs. Capcom EX	Capcom	★★½	30
Mary-Kate and Ashley: Magical Mystery Mall	Acclaim	★★★½	40
Mary-Kate and Ashley: Winner's Circle	Acclaim	★★½	45
Mass Destruction	ASC	★★½	3
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX	Activision	★★★★	45
Maximum Force	Midway	★½	2
MDK	Playmates	★★½	3
Medal of Honor	**Electronic Arts**	★★★★	**27**
Medal of Honor Underground	Electronic Arts	★★★★	39
MediEvil	Sony CEA	★★★★	14
MediEvil II	Sony CEA	★★★½	32
Mega Man Legends	Capcom	★★★★	12
Mega Man Legends 2	Capcom	★★★½	39
Mega Man X4	Capcom	★★★	4
Mega Man X5	Capcom	★★★½	41
Mega Man X6	Capcom	★★★	53
Men in Black–The Series: Crashdown	Infogrames	★★★	54
Metal Gear Solid	**Konami**	★★★★★	**14**
Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions	Konami	★★★★	25
Metal Slug X	Agetec	★★★★	43
Micro Machines	**Midway**	★★★★★	**5**
Micro Maniacs	Codemasters	★★★★	32
Mike Tyson Boxing	Codemasters	★★	39
Miracle Space Race	Mud Duck	★	71
The Misadventures of Tron Bonne	Capcom	★★★★	31
Miss Spider's Tea Party	Simon & Schuster	★★★	41
Missile Command	Hasbro	★★★	28
Mission: Impossible	Infogrames	★★	28
MK Mythologies	Midway	★★½	3
MLB 98	Sony CEA	★★★	1
MLB 99	Sony CEA	★★★★	9
MLB 2000	989 Studios	★★★★	21
MLB 2001	989 Studios	★★★	33
MLB 2002	Sony CEA	★★	46
MLB 2003	Sony CEA	★★★★	60
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	★★★★½	70
MLB Bottom of the 9th 99	Konami	★★★½	12
Mobil 1: Rally Championship	Electronic Arts	★★★	32
Mobile Armor	Agetec	★	70
Mobile Light Force	XS Games	★★★½	69
Monaco Grand Prix	Ubisoft	★★★½	21
Monkey Hero	Take-Two	★★	18
Monkey Magic	Sunsoft	★	29
Monopoly	**Hasbro**	★★★	**5**
Monster Bass!	XS Games	★★	70
Monster Rancher 2	Tecmo	★★★★	26
Monster Rancher Battle Card: Episode II	Tecmo	★★★½	36
Monster Rancher Hop-A-Bout	Tecmo	★★★½	41
Monster Seed	Sunsoft	★★½	20
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	★★★½	51
Mort the Chicken	Crave	★½	41
Mortal Kombat: Special Forces	Midway	★½	36
Mortal Kombat 4	**Midway**	★★★½	**11**
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	Midway	n/a	n/a
Moto Racer	**Electronic Arts**	★★★★★	**3**
Moto Racer 2	Electronic Arts	★★★★½	14
Moto Racer World Tour	Infogrames	★★★★	40
Motocross Mania	Take-Two	★	48
Motocross Mania 2	Gotham Games	★★½	72
Motorhead	Fox Interactive	★★★½	14
Mr. Domino	Acclaim	★★★½	15
Mr. Driller	Namco	★★★★	33
Ms. Pac-Man Maze Madness	Namco	★★★★	38
MTV Music Generator	Codemasters	★★★★	28
MTV Sports: Pure Ride	THQ	★★★½	39
MTV Sports: Skateboarding Feat. Andy MacDonald	THQ	★	39
MTV Sports: Snowboarding	THQ	★★★½	27
MTV Sports: T.J. Lavin's Ultimate BMX	THQ	★★	45
MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	Gotham Games	★	76
The Mummy	Konami	★★★	41
Muppet Monster Adventure	Midway	★★★★	39
Muppet Race Mania	Midway	★★★½	39
My Disney Kitchen	Bam	n/a	n/a
N.GEN Racing	Infogrames	★★½	35
N20	Fox Interactive	★★	11
Nagano Winter Olympics 98	Konami	★★	6
❷ **Namco Museum Vol. 3**	**Namco**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Did you know that Dig Dug is Mr. Driller's dad? Seriously, it's true! Think about that next time you wear a *Dig Dug* shirt.			
NASCAR 98	**EA Sports**	★★★★	**3**
NASCAR 99	**EA Sports**	★★★★	**14**
NASCAR 2000	EA Sports	★★★★	26
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	★★½	38
NASCAR Heat	Hasbro	★★★½	40
NASCAR Rumble	Electronic Arts	★★★½	31
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	★★	52
NASCAR Thunder 2004	EA Sports	★½	74
NBA Fastbreak 98	Midway	★★½	4
NBA Hoopz	Midway	★★★	43
NBA In the Zone 98	Konami	★★½	7
NBA In the Zone 99	Konami	★★★½	19
NBA In the Zone 2000	Konami	★★½	28
NBA Live 98	EA Sports	★★★★½	3
NBA Live 99	EA Sports	★★★★	16
NBA Live 2000	EA Sports	★★★★½	28
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	★★★★	39
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	★★★½	53
NBA ShootOut 98	Sony CEA	★★★½	8
NBA ShootOut 2000	989 Studios	★★★	30
NBA ShootOut 2001	989 Studios	★★½	39
NBA ShootOut 2002	Sony CEA	★★★½	50
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	★★★½	63
NBA ShootOut 2004	Sony CEA	★★★½	76
NBA Showtime: NBA on NBC	Midway	★★★	28
NBA Tonight	ESPN Digital	★★★	14
NCAA Final Four 99	989 Studios	★★★½	18
NCAA Final Four 2000	989 Studios	★★★½	28
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	★★	40
NCAA Football 98	EA Sports	★★	2

REPLAY FORUM

100% IN FFX-2

Hey *OPM*. I figured I'd submit the best *FFX-2* tip there is: How to get 100 percent in *FFX-2* without beating all 101 levels of the Via Infinito.

The first time you play the game, give the Awesome Sphere to the Youth League. Now go ahead and beat the game with whatever percentage you want—just make sure that you get those few fractions of a percentage point that you can only get by giving the sphere to the Youth League. Now, on your second playthrough, give the Awesome Sphere to New Yevon. This time through, be sure to get the percentage points you can only get by giving the sphere to New Yevon. Over the course of your second game, be sure to do any of the tasks, missions, and side quests you didn't complete your first time through. Now all that's left is the Via Infinito. Make it to level 20 and get the last Crimson Sphere. Your next stop is the Den of Woe (it helps if you're above level 65). Complete the Den of Woe and you should now have 100 percent completion without ever having to navigate all 101 floors of the Via Infinito. Which is a good thing, considering Trema is nearly impossible to beat with 999,999 HP.

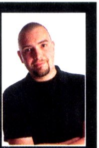
Brice Simmons
TheSoulTakerX
@aol.com

CONTENTS

www.playstationmagazine.com

MORE EXCLUSIVES THAN ANY OTHER PS2 MAGAZINE

We're exclusive crazy around here this month

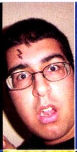

John Davison
Editor-in-Chief

We were the first people outside of Sony employees to see *Sly 2: Band of Thieves* anywhere in the world, and to prove it, we have tons of screens and info for you to check out on page 88. We also have new screens of first-person shooters *Shellshock* and *Killzone*, the latter of which we'll be following up next month with an exclusive cover story. Elsewhere we have a ton of new *Rainbow Six 3* screens that you won't see anywhere else, as well as exclusive new screens of a bunch of games featuring very angry people. *Hitman: Contracts* starts us off, with Agent 47 spending the bulk of the game very pissed off, and then there's *The Getaway 2*, which features an extremely angry-looking man in an uncomfortably tight sweater. Brand-new details on Atari's ambitious *DRIV3R*, a game awash in angry folk, can be found on page 38, along with an interview (page 34) with leading man Michael Madsen, who is apparently quite a sweetheart. Then, of course, there's our exclusive playable DVD, featuring six exclusive demos, one of which you can even *talk to*.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

RAVI HIRANAND

Not only is Ravi the guy we go to when we need info on wacky Japanese games you'll never see here, he's also the guy CNN calls their "Techwatch Gadget Guru"; oh, and he's also a big Harry Potter fan. Could you tell?



RYAN LOCKHART

Our "insider" used to work for *Electronic Gaming Monthly*, but now he's making games for a living. We still can't tell you what he's working on (very hush-hush, don't ya know), except to say that it'll be fantastic.
www.sevenstudios.com

MICHAEL SEXTON

Michael has shot for such big names as *Time*, *National Geographic Adventure*, *Discover*, and *Guitar World*. He's done tons of photos for us, too; this month he shot our game pad and our peripheral roundup.
www.sextonarts.com

NICH MARAGOS

Nich is the guy who serves up all that tasty, luscious, steaming PS2 content for our website. He's also the guy we go to when we have really bad games that we don't want—er, don't have time to review.
www.1UP.com

Videogames Have Ratings, Just Like Movies

The Entertainment Software Rating Board provides information about videogame content. ESRB ratings are intended as guidelines only; parents should still monitor minors' purchases.

WWW.ESRB.ORG

EARLY CHILDHOOD RATING	EVERYONE RATING	TEEN RATING	MATURE RATING	ADULTS ONLY RATING
Deemed suitable for children 3 or older. Products carrying this label have absolutely no material that would be considered inappropriate by parents.	The E replaced the previous K-A rating last year. Suitable for kids ages 6 and up, E-rated games may contain minimal violence or crude language.	Contains suggestive themes; mild or strong language; and animated violence. Some parents may want to supervise children playing T-rated games.	These games contain more adult themes, such as blood and gore; stronger language; and sexual themes. Deemed not suitable for those under 17.	The extreme of the ratings, suitable for adults only. Packs sexual themes and extreme violence. Console manufacturers have yet to allow an AO-rated game.

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XERXES

The first prince of Persia (he was King Darius' son), he went to war with the Greeks and lost.

READER REVIEWS

Prince on ice!

We want your reviews of the best and worst games, so write a review and send it to opm@ziffdavis.com. We can't publish everyone's, so keep it short, be witty, and remember that not every game deserves a five-star rating just because you like it!

"Welcome to the cheapest combat ever in the history of gaming."

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME

What you said: "Upon first booting up *Prince of Persia* and battling your way through all the levels, you would believe that you must hone your platform skills in order to dominate this game. You would be wrong.

Welcome to the cheapest combat ever in the history of gaming. There is a reason for the Rewind button. "Why?" you say. Not because you might fall to your death—no. It's because enemies you fight will sweep you off your feet and gang up on you. This is really cheap. Aside from the fact that the combat is filler to lengthen what would be a four-hour game, it also is largely unfair.

BradyGames suggests you keep moving. Well, that sure compensates for the lack of a low-block option. If you constantly move, then you won't die. Another great feature of the combat is that you must not drink water. In the game, it restores health, but in combat, it is forbidden. Sure, you can try, but your sand-filled rivals will be there waiting to hit you as you attempt to recover health.

Clearly, there is one solution and one only. During combat in *POP*, you must be perfect. Any flaws, and the game will punish you. The other jumping and wall-running bits were fine. The bats were pointless."

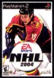
Your Score ★★★

Jason Smith
Jason.Smith@Altour.us

What we said: "But look, if you like adventure games, you'll love this game. If you like platform games, you'll love this game. It's got story, it's got action, it's got amazing graphics—and some of the best animation you'll see anywhere."

Our Score ★★★★★

NHL 2004



What you said: "I've been playing hockey for 10 years now. When *OPM* reviewed *ESPN NHL Hockey*, it said the game was 4.5 out of 5 stars. I went out and bought it and didn't play it much. Then I got *NHL 2004* for Christmas this year. The gameplay is great. I don't know why you guys said that there's too much hitting to get an offensive rush going. There's never too much hitting in hockey. Plus, you can deke them! The fighting and hitting rules, better than *NHL Hitz*'s and way better than *ESPN*'s. The sound is great, too, like real line changes and board/glass sounds. The dynasty mode absolutely rocks; you guys did a good job of telling that part to readers. The only thing missing: minigames."

Your Score ★★★★½

Dan Czak
danczakfamily@zoominternet.net

What we said: "But what *NHL 2004* lacks in the gameplay department, it almost makes up for in play options—specifically in the fantastic dynasty mode."

Our Score ★★★★

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NCAA Football 99	EA Sports	★★★★½	12
NCAA Football 2000	EA Sports	★★★★	25
NCAA Football 2001	EA Sports	★★★½	36
NCAA GameBreaker 98	Sony CEA	★★★★	4
NCAA GameBreaker 99	989 Studios	★★★★	15
NCAA GameBreaker 2000	989 Studios	★★★	25
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	★★½	37
NCAA March Madness 98	EA Sports	★★★★	7
NCAA March Madness 99	EA Sports	★★★	18
NCAA March Madness 2000	EA Sports	★★★★	29
NCAA March Madness 2001	EA Sports	★★	41
Nectaris: Military Madness	Jaleco	★★★★	17
Need for Speed III	**Electronic Arts**	★★★★	**8**
Need for Speed: High Stakes	**Electronic Arts**	★★★★½	**20**
Need for Speed: Porsche Unleashed	Electronic Arts	★★★½	33
Need for Speed: V-Rally	Electronic Arts	★½	3
Need for Speed: V-Rally 2	Electronic Arts	★★★½	28
Newman/Haas Racing	Psygnosis	★★	7
The Next Tetris	Hasbro	★★★	24
NFL Blitz	**Midway**	★★★★★	**13**
NFL Blitz 2000	**Midway**	★★★★★	**24**
NFL Blitz 2001	Midway	★★★½	38
NFL GameDay 98	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**1**
NFL GameDay 99	989 Studios	★★★★	13
NFL GameDay 2000	989 Studios	★★★★	25
NFL GameDay 2001	989 Studios	★★½	37
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	★★	49
NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	★★★★	62
NFL GameDay 2004	Sony CEA	★★	74
NFL Xtreme	989 Studios	★★	11
NFL Xtreme 2	989 Studios	★½	24
NHL 98	EA Sports	★★★★	2
NHL 99	EA Sports	★★★★½	15
NHL 2000	EA Sports	★★★★	26
NHL 2001	EA Sports	★★★★	38
NHL Blades of Steel 2000	Konami	★★	28
NHL Breakaway 98	Acclaim	★★★	2
NHL Championship 2000	Fox Interactive	★★★	27
NHL FaceOff 98	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**2**
NHL FaceOff 99	989 Studios	★★★★	14
NHL FaceOff 2000	989 Studios	★★★★	26
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	★★★★½	38
NHL Rock the Rink	Electronic Arts	★★★★	32
Nick Toons Racing	Infogrames	★★★	48
Nightmare Creatures	Activision	★★★½	3
Nightmare Creatures II	Konami	★★	33
Ninja: Shadow of Darkness	Eidos	★½	15
Nuclear Strike	Electronic Arts	★★★★½	3
O.D.T.	Psygnosis	★½	15
Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus	GT Interactive	★★★★½	15
Oddworld: Abe's Oddysee	**GT Interactive**	★★★★	**1**
Omega Boost	Sony CEA	★★★★	25
One	ASC	★★★★	4
One Piece Mansion	Capcom	★½	50
Pac-Man World	**Namco**	★★★★½	**25**
Pandemonium! 2	Midway	★★★½	3
Panzer Front	Agetec	★★★½	51
PaRappa the Rapper	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**2**
Parasite Eve	**Square EA**	★★★★	**12**
Parasite Eve II	Square EA	★★★★½	37
Patriotic Pinball	Gotham Games	★★½	70
Persona 2: Eternal Punishment	Atlus	★★★★	41
Peter Jacobsen's Golden Tee Golf	Infogrames	★★★½	41
PGA Tour 98	EA Sports	★★★	3
Phix: The Adventure	Agetec	★½	74
Pinobee	Konami	★★	68
Pipe Dreams 3D	Empire Int.	★★	52
Pitfall 3D	Activision	★★	9
Planet of the Apes	Ubisoft	★★★	63
Play With the Teletubbies	Knowledge Adv.	★★	36
Pocket Fighter	Capcom	★★★★	11
Point Blank	Namco	★★★½	6
Point Blank 2	Namco	★★★½	20
Point Blank 3	Namco	★★★½	44

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Polaris SnoCross	Vatical	★★½	38
Pong	Hasbro	★★★½	27
Pool Hustler	Activision	★★★★	15
Populous: The Beginning	Electronic Arts	★½	21
Porsche Challenge	Sony CEA	★★★½	1
Power Play Sports Trivia	Ubisoft	★★	58
Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue	THQ	★½	40
Power Shovel	Acclaim	★★★	49
Power Soccer 2	Psygnosis	★★★	5
Power Spike Pro Beach Volleyball	Infogrames	★★½	41
The Powerpuff Girls: Chemical X-Traction	Bam	★½	51
Poy Poy	Konami	★★★	3
Pro 18 World Tour Golf	Psygnosis	★★	19
Pro Pinball: Big Race USA	Empire	★★★½	37
Pro Pinball: Fantastic Journey	Empire	★★★½	37
Pro Pinball: Timeshock!	Take-Two	★	10
Psybadek	Psygnosis	★★	15
Punky Skunk	Jaleco	★★★	6
Putter Golf	Agetec	½	53
Puzzle Star Sweep	Agetec	★★½	43
Puzznic	Mud Duck	★	71
Q-Bert	Hasbro	★★½	28
Quake II	Activision	★★★★	27
R-Type Delta	Agetec	★★★★½	23
R-Types	Ascii	★★★½	17
R4: Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco	★★★★	20
Racing	Agetec	½	43
Rage Ball	Agetec	★½	68
Railroad Tycoon II	Take-Two	★★★	30
Rainbow Six	Red Storm	★	27
Rally Cross 2	989 Studios	★★★½	15
Rampage	Midway	★★½	4
Rampage 2: Universal Tour	Midway	★	21
Rampage Through Time	Midway	★½	36
Ray Tracers	THQ	★★★	5
RayCrisis	Working Designs	★★★	38
Rayman 2: The Great Escape	Ubisoft	★★★★	35
Rayman Brain Games	Ubisoft	★★★	50
Rayman Rush	Ubisoft	★★★	57
Razor Freestyle Scooter	Crave	★★★	41
RC de GO!	Acclaim	★★★★	40
RC Helicopter	Agetec	★½	68
RC Revenge	Acclaim	★★★½	37
RC Stunt Copter	Titus	★★★★	25
Re-Volt	Acclaim	★★	26
Ready 2 Rumble	**Midway**	★★★½	**27**
Ready 2 Rumble: Round 2	Midway	★★★	40
Red Asphalt	Interplay	★½	3
Reel Fishing	**Natsume**	★★★	**3**
Reel Fishing II	Natsume	★★	34
Resident Evil: Director's Cut	**Capcom**	★★★	**2**
Resident Evil 2	**Capcom**	★★★★★	**6**
Resident Evil 2: Dual Shock	**Capcom**	★★★★★	**13**
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis	Capcom	★★★★½	27
Resident Evil: Survivor	Capcom	★½	38
Rhapsody: A Musical Adventure	Atlus	★★★	35
Rising Zan	Agetec	★★★★	24
Risk	Hasbro	★★★★	11
Rival Schools	Capcom	★★★★	14
Riven: The Sequel to Myst	**Acclaim**	★★★★★	**6**
Road Rash 3D	**Electronic Arts**	★★★	**11**
Road Rash: Jail Break	Electronic Arts	★★	30
Rock 'Em Sock 'Em Robots	Mattel	★★★	41
Rocket Power: Team Rocket Rescue	THQ	★½	51
Rogue Trip	GT Interactive	★★★½	14
Roll Away	Psygnosis	★★★★½	13
Rollcage	Psygnosis	★★★½	19
Rollcage Stage II	Psygnosis	★★★½	31
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VI	Koei	★★	30
Roswell Conspiracies: Aliens, Myths, & Legends	Red Storm	★	48
RPG Maker	Agetec	★★★★½	35
Rugrats: Totally Angelica	THQ	★★★½	48
Rugrats in Paris: The Movie	THQ	★★★	41
Runabout 2	Hot-B	★	36

$32,662,257,156

Bill Gates' net worth. Guess he did the infinite gil trick found below but applied it to life instead of *FFX-2*.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Running Wild	989 Studios	★★	14
Rushdown	Electronic Arts	★★	19
Sabrina, Teenage Witch: A Twitch in Time!	Knowledge Adv.	½	45
SaGa Frontier	Sony CEA	★★★½	8
SaGa Frontier 2	Square EA	★★★½	29
Saiyuki: Journey West	Koei	★★★½	47
Saltwater Sportfishing	Agetec	★★½	52
Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001	3DO	★★	32
Sammy Sosa Softball Slam	3DO	★★	33
Samurai Shodown: Warrior's Rage	SNK	★½	36
Scooby-Doo and the Cyber Chase	THQ	★★	52
Scrabble	Hasbro	★★½	28
Sentinel Returns	Psygnosis	★★	11
Sesame Street Sports	NewKidCo	★★★½	54
Shadow Madness	Crave	★★½	19
Shadow Man	Acclaim	★½	27
Shadow Master	Psygnosis	★★★★	5
Shadow Tower	Agetec	½	28
Shanghai: True Valor	Sunsoft	★★★	20
Sheep	Empire	★★★	41
Shipwreckers	Psygnosis	★★★	3
Shooter: Space Shot	Agetec	★★★½	48
Shooter: Starfighter Sanvein	Agetec	★★	43
Shrek: Treasure Hunt	TDK Mediactive	n/a	n/a
Silent Bomber	Bandai	★★★★	30
Silent Hill	**Konami**	★★★★	**18**
Silhouette Mirage	Working Designs	★★★½	29
Sim Theme Park	Electronic Arts	★★½	33
The Simpsons Wrestling	Taito	★★	45
Skullmonkeys	**Electronic Arts**	★★★★★	**6**
Skydiving Extreme	Banpresto	★½	49
Sled Storm	**Electronic Arts**	★★★★	**24**
Slots	Activision	★★	72
Small Soldiers	Electronic Arts	★½	15
Smurfs	Infogrames	★★★★	29
Smurf Racer	Infogrames	★★	45
Sno-Cross Championship Racing	Crave	★½	37
Snowboarding	Agetec	★★	43
Sol Divide	XS Games	★★★	68
Sorcerer's Maze	XS Games	★★★½	68
Soul of the Samurai	Konami	★½	24
South Park	Acclaim	★½	27
South Park: Chef's Luv Shack	Acclaim	★	28
South Park Rally	Acclaim	★½	29
Space Invaders	Activision	★★★	27
Spawn: The Eternal	Sony CEA	★★	4
Spec Ops: Covert Assault	Take-Two	★	52
Spec Ops: Ranger Elite	Take-Two	★	46
Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol	Take-Two	★	34
Speed Punks	Sony CEA	★★★★½	32
Speed Racer	Jaleco	★★	8
Speedball 2100	Empire	★★½	40
Spider-Man	**Activision**	★★★★★	**37**
Spider-Man 2: Enter Electro	Activision	★★★½	50
Spin Jam	Take-Two	★½	38
SpongeBob SquarePants	THQ	★★	51
Sports Car GT	Electronic Arts	★★½	21
Spyro the Dragon	**Sony CEA**	★★★★	**13**
Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage!	**Sony CEA**	★★★★½	**27**
Spyro 3: Year of the Dragon	**Sony CEA**	★★★★★	**39**
Star Ocean: The 2nd Story	Sony CEA	★★★★½	22
Star Trek: Invasion	Activision	★★★★½	37
Star Wars Episode I: Jedi Power Battles	LucasArts	★★½	33
Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace	**LucasArts**	★★★	**25**
Star Wars Masters of Teräs Käsi	LucasArts	★★★	4
Star Wars Demolition	LucasArts	★★★½	41
Steel Reign	Sony CEA	★★★	2
Streak	GT Interactive	★★½	15
Street Fighter Alpha 3	**Capcom**	★★★★★	**21**
Street Fighter Collection	Capcom	★★★	4
Street Fighter Collection 2	Capcom	★★★	16
Street Fighter EX Plus Alpha	Capcom	★★★★	2
Street Fighter EX2 Plus	Capcom	★★★	33
Street Racquetball	Agetec	½	68

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Street Sk8er	Electronic Arts	★★½	19
Street Sk8er 2	Electronic Arts	★★★	32
Strider 2	Capcom	★★★½	34
Striker Pro 2000	Infogrames	★★★★	33
Strikers 1945	Agetec	★★½	44
Stuart Little 2	Sony CEA	★★½	60
Suikoden II	Konami	★★★★	26
Super Bubble Pop	Jaleco	★	68
Super Shot Soccer	Tecmo	★★★½	61
Superbike 2000	EA Sports	★½	32
SuperCross 2000	EA Sports	★½	29
SuperCross Circuit	989 Studios	★★★½	28
Superstar Dance Club #1 Hits!!!	XS Games	★★½	67
Surf Riders	Ubisoft	★½	35
Sydney 2000	Eidos	★★	38
Syphon Filter	**989 Studios**	★★★★	**18**
Syphon Filter 2	989 Studios	★★★½	31
Syphon Filter 3	Sony CEA	★★★½	52
T'ai Fu	Activision	★½	19
T.R.A.G.	Sunsoft	★★★	20
Tactics Ogre	Atlus	★★★½	12
Tail Concerto	Atlus	★★★½	26
Tales of Destiny	Namco	★★★★	13
Tales of Destiny II	Namco	★★★½	49
Tall: Infinity	Agetec	★½	75
Tarzan	**Sony CEA**	★★★½	**24**
Team Buddies	Midway	★★★½	38
Team LOSI RC Racing	Fox Interactive	★★½	13
Tekken 3	**Namco**	★★★★★	**9**
Tenchu	**Activision**	★★★★	**14**
Tenchu 2: Birth of the Stealth Assassins	Activision	★★★	37
Tennis	Agetec	★★	53
Tennis Arena	Ubisoft	★★½	4
Test Drive 4	**Accolade**	★★★½	**3**
Test Drive 5	**Accolade**	★★★½	**15**
Test Drive 6	Infogrames	★★★½	27
Test Drive: Le Mans	Infogrames	★★½	34
Test Drive: Off-Road 3	Infogrames	★★	26
Thousand Arms	Atlus	★★★★	26
Thrasher: Skate & Destroy	Rockstar	★★★½	29
Threads of Fate	Square EA	★★★½	35
Thunder Force V	Working Designs	★★★	13
Tiger Woods 99 PGA Tour Golf	EA Sports	★★★★	16
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports	★★★½	41
Tigger's Honey Hunt	NewKidCo	★★★★	41
Time Crisis: Project Titan	Namco	★★★	45
Tiny Tank	Sony CEA	★★	25
Tiny Toon Adventures: Plucky's Big Adventure	Conspiracy	★½	50
Tiny Toons: The Great Beanstalk	NewKidCo	★★★★	18
TOCA 2	Activision	★★★★½	27
Tom & Jerry in House Trap	Eidos	★★★	41
Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear	Red Storm	★★½	45
Tomb Raider II	**Eidos**	★★★★½	**4**
Tomb Raider III	**Eidos**	★★★½	**16**
Tomb Raider: Chronicles	Eidos	★★½	41
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation	Eidos	★★★★	29
Tomba!	Sony CEA	★★★★	11
Tomba! 2: The Evil Swine Return	Sony CEA	★★★★	29
Tomorrow Never Dies	**Electronic Arts**	★★★½	**28**
Tonka Space Station	Hasbro	★★½	41
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater	**Activision**	★★★★½	**26**
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	**Activision**	★★★★★	**38**
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	★★★★½	51
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Activision	★★★★	64
Toonenstein: Dare to Scare	Vatical	★★½	29
Torneko: The Last Hope	Enix	★★	40
Toy Story 2	Activision	★★★	28
Toy Story Racer	Activision	★★★	44
Transformers: Beast Wars Transmetals	Bam	★	36
Trap Gunner	Atlus	★★½	13
Treasures of the Deep	Namco	★★★★	1
Trickin' Snowboarder	Capcom	★½	25
Triple Play '99	EA Sports	★★½	9
Triple Play 2000	EA Sports	★★★★½	20

REPLAY FORUM

YET MORE FFX-2

My brother and I found this one out. Once you beat the game and play a New Game Plus, you can get infinite cash. First beat the game, then start a New Game Plus and head to Macalania Woods. Go to the part where you get O'aka and put him on your airship.

Once you do, pay back his debt immediately (luckily, in New Game Plus, his debt is just 1,000 gil). After that, he decides to stay on your ship until the end of Chapter 3 or 4, then he goes to his shop. It's great 'cause when he's on your airship and you've paid his debt, he tacks a zero off everything. Now sell all of your items (just things that you can buy back, such as potions, hi-potions, phoenix downs, etc.)—to make things easier, sell them to Barkeep.

You make a good sum of money by selling these items, and once you're done, buy them back from O'aka! For example, buy 99 hi-potions from O'aka for 50 gil apiece (4,950 gil total), then sell all 99 to Barkeep for 125 gil each. You'll make 12,375 gil from this transaction.

Since you bought them for 4,950 gil, your profit comes to 7,425 gil per 99 hi-potion run! Just keep doing this over and over to rake in the dough!

Eliot John Hagen
eman_182
@hotmail.com

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Triple Play 2001	**EA Sports**	★★★★★	**32**
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	★★½	44
Turbo Prop Racing	Sony CEA	★★★	11
Turnabout	Natsume	★★★★	69
Twisted Metal III	**989 Studios**	★★½	**16**
Twisted Metal 4	**989 Studios**	★★★★	**28**
Twisted Metal: Small Brawl	Sony CEA	★★½	52
Tyco RC: Assault With a Battery	Mattel	★★	38
Ultimate 8-Ball	THQ	★★★★	22
Ultimate Fighting Championship	Crave	★★½	40
UmJammer Lammy	Sony CEA	★★★½	24
The Unholy War	Eidos	★★★	14
Uprising X	3DO	★★★	17
Urban Chaos	Eidos	★★	33
Vagrant Story	Square EA	★★★½	33
Valkyrie Profile	Enix	★★★★	36
Vampire Hunter D	Jaleco	★★	37
Vanark	Jaleco	★★★	32
Vandal Hearts II	Konami	★★★½	27
Vanguard Bandits	Working Designs	★★½	33
Vanishing Point	Acclaim	★★★½	44
Vegas Games 2000	3DO	★★★½	27
V.I.P.	Ubisoft	★★	51
Vigilante 8	**Activision**	★★★★	**10**
Vigilante 8: Second Offense	Activision	★★★	29
Virtual Kasparov	Titus	★★	49
VR Baseball '99	Interplay	★★★½	11
VR Sports Powerboat Racing	Interplay	★	10
Vs.	THQ	★	3
Walt Disney World Quest Magical Racing Tour	Eidos	★★½	33
Walt Disney's Jungle Book Rhythm n' Groove	Ubisoft	★★★	41
War Jetz	3DO	★★	48
WarGames: DefCon 1	MGM Interactive	★★★★	12
Warpath: Jurassic Park	Electronic Arts	★★	27
Warriors of Might and Magic	3DO	★★★	41
Warzone 2100	Eidos	★★★★	22
WCW Backstage Assault	EA Games	★★	40
WCW Mayhem	Electronic Arts	★★★½	26
WCW Nitro	**THQ**	★★½	**5**
WCW/nWo Thunder	THQ	★	17
The Weakest Link	Activision	★★★½	51
Wheel of Fortune	**Hasbro**	★★★★	**17**
Wheel of Fortune 2	Hasbro	★★★★	39
Winnie the Pooh: Kindergarten	Bam	n/a	n/a
Winnie the Pooh: Preschool	Bam	n/a	n/a
Who Wants to Be a Millionaire: 2nd Edition	Sony CEA	★★½	35
Who Wants to Be a Millionaire: 3rd Edition	Sony CEA	★½	47
Wild 9	Interplay	★★★½	15
Wild Arms 2	Sony CEA	★★★½	33
The Wild Thornberrys: Animal Adventure	Mattel	★½	41
WipeOut 3	Psygnosis	★★★★	26
Woody Woodpecker Racing	Konami	★★	40
World Cup 98	EA Sports	★★★	10
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3DO	½	39
World Is Not Enough	Electronic Arts	★★★	40
World's Scariest Police Chases	Activision	★★	47
Worms Armageddon	Hasbro	★★★½	27
Worms World Party	Ubisoft	★★★★	55
Wu-Tang Shaolin Style	Activision	★★★	28
WWE Attitude	Acclaim	★★★★	24
WWE SmackDown!	**THQ**	★★★★½	**31**
WWE SmackDown! 2	**THQ**	★★★★★	**40**
WWE War Zone	**Acclaim**	★★★★	**12**
X-Bladez: Inline Skater	Crave	½	55
X-Files	Fox Interactive	★★★	28
X Games Pro Boarder	ESPN Digital	★★★★	14
X-Men: Children of the Atom	Acclaim	★★	6
X-Men: Mutant Academy	Activision	★★★	36
X-Men: Mutant Academy 2	Activision	★★★	50
Xena: Warrior Princess	Electronic Arts	★★★½	26
Xenogears	Square EA	★★★★	14
You Don't Know Jack!	Berkeley Systems	★★★★½	25
You Don't Know Jack! Mock 2	Sierra	★★	40
Yu-Gi-Oh!: Forbidden Memories	Konami	★½	57

P.S.

Misty, water-colored memories of the way we were.

RANDOM FUN FACT

The artwork for our "Year of the RPG" feature was actually incomplete; the artist ran out of time and was unable to finish coloring the "PS monster."

PLAYSTATION 2 BREAKING NEWS!
Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
THE YEAR OF THE ROLE PLAYING GAME
13 NEW RPGS
IN-DEPTH PREVIEW FINAL FANTASY VIII

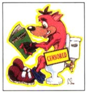
REWIND

Five years back in April 1999

'Twas the Year of the RPG, as our cover proudly proclaimed! What were we excited about back in April of 1999? What stupid game did we dis back then? What was the silliest thing we wrote back in the day? Check it out here....

The Year of the RPG

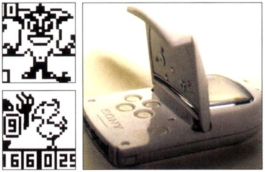
POTTY HUMOR



Remember when we ran reader art? This was our reader art of the month. We sure loved jokes involving *OPM* and toilets back then!

A WHOLE LOTTA FUN IN YOUR POCKET

PocketStation! Three pages of PocketStation! We did a hands-on report on these little guys and wrote about the weird little games available for 'em. Did you ever want to raise a chocobo in the comfort of your pocket? Well, the closest you could get was playing as a chocobo, helping him fight monsters and getting loot along the way. *Crash Bandicoot 3* had some awesome minigames, as well as a photo album full of precious moments. Who wouldn't want to see a 32-by-32-pixel black-and-white picture of Crash watching television? We also applaud the bizarre inclusion of a slot-machine game in *Street Fighter Alpha 3*.



BEHOLD! THE PS2!

PS2's CPU put us in a tizzy—we actually wanted to sit through the International Solid-State Circuits Conference. We wrote this sentence: "The new PlayStation 2 CPU has two integer pipelines, as well as a floating-point math processor, two vector math units (VPU0 and VPU1), and a dedicated MPEG-2 decoding subsystem." Then we spent most of the article explaining what the hell that one sentence meant. In a move to possibly rival William Faulkner, the phrase "Bezier surface patches" was followed by a 100-word definition of "Bezier surface patch." Suffice it to say, we were all excited about how powerful PS2 was, even though we barely understood its power.

BEST GAME OF THE MONTH

PlayStation
Legend of Legaia

What's an RPG roundup feature without a few RPG reviews? While the actual Reviews section was primarily filled with mediocrity, the "Year of the RPG" feature gave props (and four discs) to *Legend of Legaia* and its excellent writing and unique battle system. If you don't mind long (and very random) battles, it might be worth spending 15 bucks on at your local game store or eBay listing.

WORST GAME OF THE MONTH

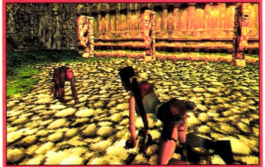
PlayStation
T'ai Fu
Wrath of the Tiger
Activision

We might not have been able to pick a best game, but man alive, here's the worst: *T'ai Fu*. Yes, you read that right: *T'ai Fu*. Or, as reviewer Wataru Maruyama put it, "It's sad, but *T'ai Fu* is basically the same game as Eidos' *Ninja*, except the main character is a tiger." OK, the game itself isn't a complete abomination (it did get one-and-a-half discs, so it had...well, one-and-a-half discs' worth of merit). There are some decent moves available, and the graphics and environments were generally well done. But a ton of slowdown and craptacular collision detection made it obvious that the game was a case of "rushed out too early." Then again, just how much time should a company dedicate to a game featuring a bipedal tiger who knows martial arts?!? Needless to say, there was never a sequel.

RPG BLAST FROM THE PAST!

Talk about your enduring RPGs. While we were all agape over the upcoming *Final Fantasy VIII*, we also wrote praise-filled previews of *Suikoden II*, *Star Ocean: The Second Story*, *Dragon Quest VII*, and even *SaGa Frontier 2*. And now we're looking forward to *Final Fantasy XII*, *Star Ocean: Till the End of Time*, *Suikoden IV*, and *Dragon Warrior VIII*. We're politely not going to mention that whole *Unlimited SaGa* deal. The best part of this big, fancy RPG roundup? The fact that *Thousand Arms* has "girlfriend hunting" listed as a minigame. Why aren't there more relationship searches in RPGs now?

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER: 4/99



"Bobo would go on to enjoy many more mating seasons, but none would compare to the balmy summer of '98."
–Ryan Zillmer, Beaver Dam, WI

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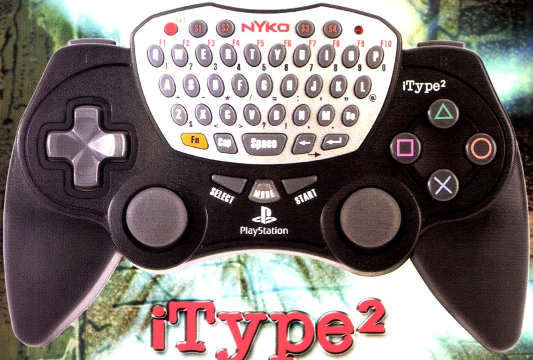
★★★★ "Ever wish you had a keyboard handy, just for online chats? Here's your solution."
iType2, Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine, January 2004

Choose Your Weapon Wisely...



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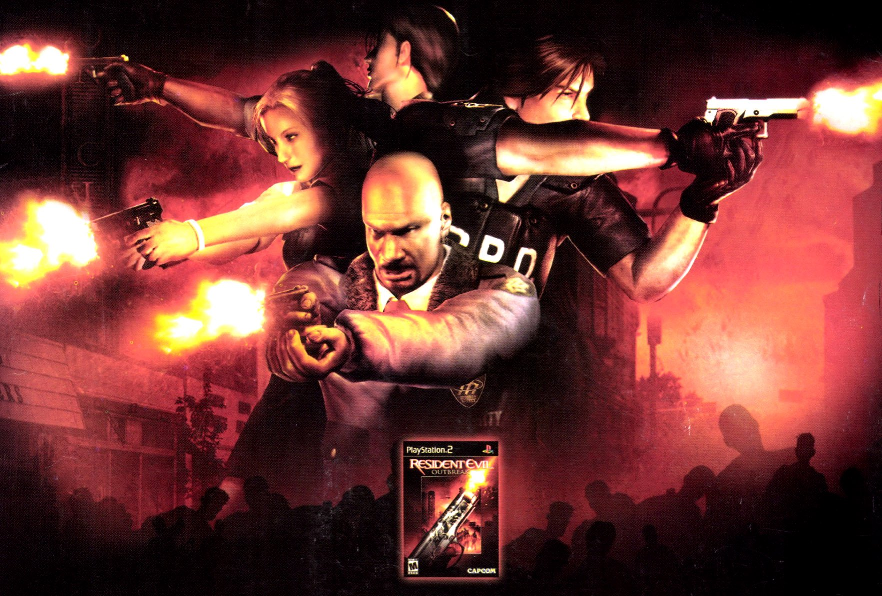

03-30-04

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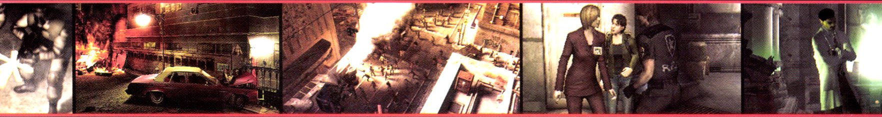

*Broadband play only with network adapter

MATURE 17+ M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Intense Violence

ONLINE BROADBAND ONLY

PlayStation.2

CAPCOM

www.residentevil.com

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TEEN
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Violence

PlayStation 2

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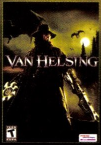

www.vanhelsinggame.com

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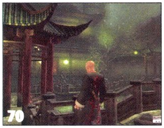
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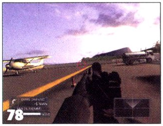
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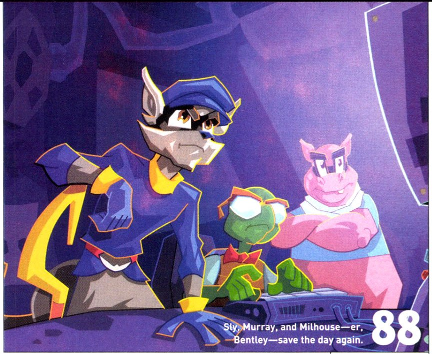
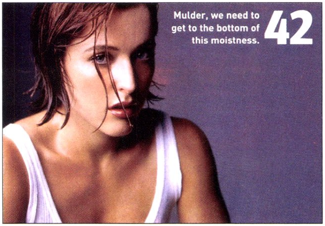

Sly, Murray, and Milhouse—er, Bentley—save the day again. 88


Mulder, we need to get to the bottom of this moistness. 42

The first *Sly* was a breath of fresh air for platform fans. Now Sly's back, and we've got the exclusive first look.

PlayStation
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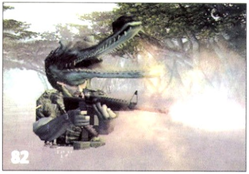
OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE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98	Firefighter F.D. 18	★★½
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99	MX Unleashed	★★★★
100	Naval Ops: Commander	★★½
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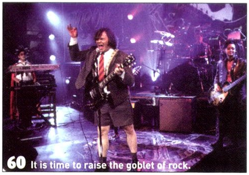
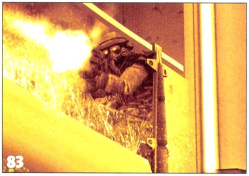
102	Onimusha: Blade Warriors	★★½
100	Romance of the Three Kingdoms IX	★★★
102	Worms 3D	★★★½


60 It is time to raise the goblet of rock.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ON THIS MONTH'S EXCLUSIVE PLAYABLE PS2 DVD

PLAYGROUND

- World Soccer Winning Eleven 7 International
- Castlevania: Lament of Innocence
- Firefighter F.D. 18
- Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup
- Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm
- Lifeline

REPLAY

- Jak II
- Starsky & Hutch
- Freaky Flyers
- DDRMAX2

INSIDE THE GAME

- Final Fantasy XI, part 2
- Logitech USB headset
- The making of Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup

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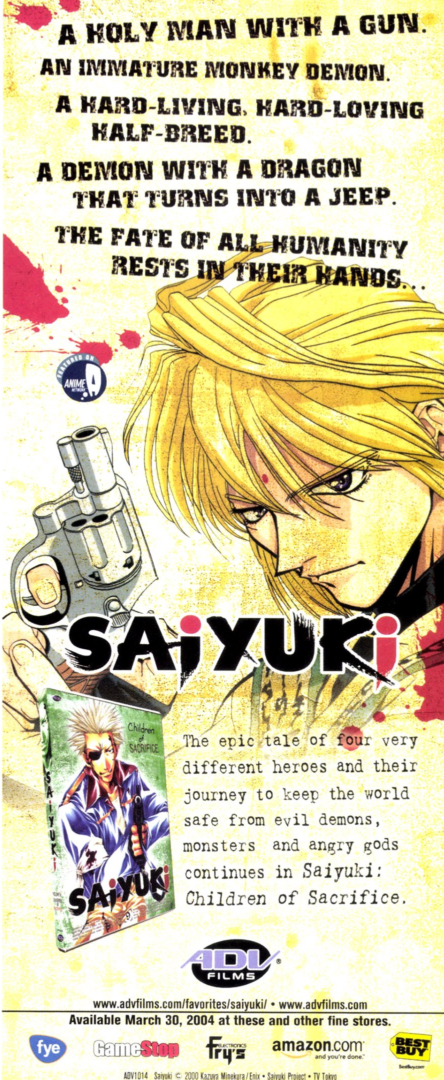
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A DEMON WITH A DRAGON THAT TURNS INTO A JEEP.
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only way out of the
Hong Kong underworld
is to go back in.
TEEN
T
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Violence

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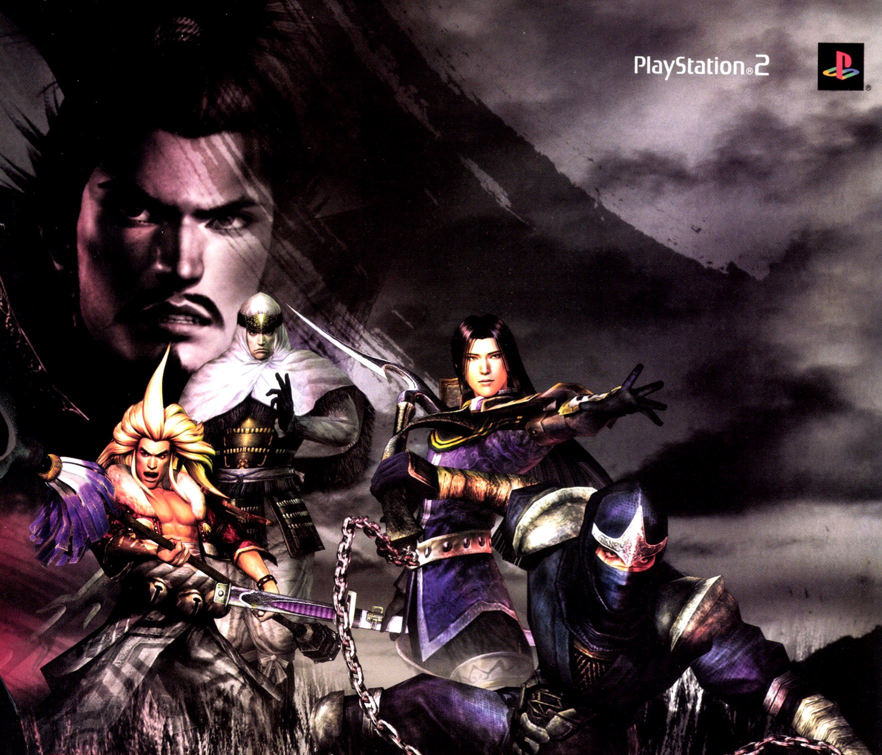
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213
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INPUT

Bossy letters.

OVERHEARD

"I know who you should be / Someone who truly loves me."
–Sample lyric from "Happy Heart in the Sunshine"

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine
Game of the Year
FINAL FANTASY XI
ONLINE
EXCLUSIVE FIRST REVIEW!
NEED FOR SPEED
FINAL FANTASY X-2
SOCOM II
GRAN TURISMO 4

The message board is abuzz about last month's *Final Fantasy XI* feature and the perfect 5 it scored in our exclusive first review. "I am glad [it] got a score it deserves," says grEenLeaFx. "I'll refrain from stating my opinions on *FFXI*," comments the cynical Arlan-Kels. "I'm not in the mood to be insulted, harassed, or sneered at by biased, opinionated others." Youch.

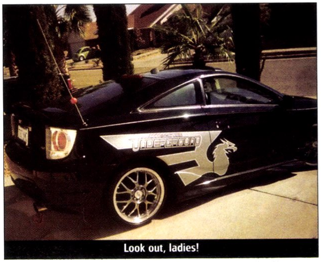
I FEEL THE NEED

I've been a fanatic about videogames since the first polygon came into existence. As soon as EA Games announced *Need for Speed Underground*, I reserved my copy for PS2. I'm getting the Game Boy Advance version, too, so I can play while I'm driving. (Just kidding!)

To prove I'm such a fanatic of the game, I've enclosed a picture of my pride and joy, using one of the team logos from *Underground*. I thought it was appropriate since my car is used as one of the street cars. (Ah, there's nothing like the 2002 Toyota Celica.)

Now don't get me wrong—I'm not getting paid to sponsor or endorse the game (so don't sue me). But it sure looks cool—and the chicks dig it!

Eddie "Mad" Macias
El Paso, TX


Look out, ladies!

How could they not? (OK, maybe the better question is, "Really?!")

YUNA BUSTS A GROOVE

I was playing through *Final Fantasy X-2* today and got to the part where Yuna "sings" to the crew on top of the Celsius. That song sounded familiar to me. I was thinking about where I might have heard it all night long, humming it over and over. After much deliberation, I dusted off my copy of *Bust-A-Groove 2* (and was very excited and surprised to see the Enix logo on the loading screen). Sure enough, there it was. The song that Yuna sings is Shorty's song, "Happy Heart in the Sunshine"!

Shane Snyder
Princeton, MN

Good catch, Shane! The coolest in-jokes are always the ones only a handful of people will get. Guess we know Yuna's gaming genre of choice now, huh?

YOU'RE NOT THE BOSS OF ME!

Why are bosses in videogames called bosses? Do they really control the other enemies you fight in a game? When you kill someone like Sephiroth, it doesn't mean the other enemies will all become disorganized and lazy. But seriously, it's always been this way. And I want to know why! Maybe the people making the games hate their bosses so much, they want the players to feel the same sense of dread as you see the boss perform his super move—the deadline! Where all characters have Zombie, Haste, and Berserk suddenly cast on them!

Realistically, I would think that the term originated in some game somewhere a long time ago, in a game-development company far, far away. Perhaps at one point, defeating a boss actually had *some* effect on the other fiends in the game. I mean, beating Sin and bringing the Eternal Calm in *Final Fantasy X-2* didn't stop the endless hordes of random battles!

Arthur Huang
via e-mail

Nice analysis there, Art. Near as we can tell, the first time "boss" was used as a videogame term was in the manual for 1986's *Metroid* on NES (all but Mother Brain were actually known as "Mini-Bosses"). Anyone have proof of an earlier usage? E-mail us!

POKER, PLEASE

Poker is becoming increasingly popular. I believe the number of poker players has risen to, like, 5 million plus. So I ask, where is my poker game? And no, not the cheesy, five-dollar, casino-type games. A story-mode-type poker game, where the player goes through the poker world starting as a nobody and working his way to the World Series of Poker—like *Tony Hawk's Underground*, but with cards rather than boards. There's got to be a game like this!

Kenny Rockets
via e-mail

Not a bad idea, Kenny. Or maybe, say, Konami could release its own *Celebrity Poker Showdown*. It could have characters like Dracula, Solid Snake, that afro guy from *Dance Dance Revolution*, and Frogger all seated around a table, having to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, know when to walk away, and know when to run.

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GAMERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

From message boards to printed page

OPM's monthly roundup of hot topics, gathered from the *OPM* message board at playstationmagazine.com.

FINAL FANTASY PRETTY BOYS

"Kinda funny that they make [*Final Fantasy*] guys look like girls, yet they get the girls, and we make fun of them," comments **Adrinue**, perhaps letting a crush on Yuna get to him. "So what do you think of this?"

"I think *Final Fantasy* is starting to get a little fruity here," answers **xtremeskater3**. "Maybe I should abandon ship while there is still time...."

"Why would this be of concern to *anyone*?" questions **TheApparition**, who felt concerned enough to respond to the post.

"They suck!" voices **saiaman**. "They should be more like Auron. He's cool. But anyway, it's not like you'll be able to hook up with one of the girls."

"Yeah, *FF* is gettin' pretty weird, but I got no problem 'bout it, since I'm a pretty boy myself," admits **megaman19**, who, after telling us he's looking in the mirror, says, "Hey there, good-lookin'."

PLOT HOLES

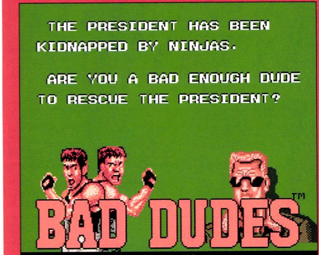
"There's no denying it," begins **HeartlessCloud07**, "in both smaller titles and big-budget ones, there are sometimes story holes that aren't major but do affect the plot in one way or another. Here's one I found: In *Final Fantasy X*, when Sin appears after the Calm, summoners start their pilgrimages to get the Final Aeon. My thought is, if they know Sin will keep coming, why not go on pilgrimages during the Calm?! I mean, do the future summoners just sit around the entire time, or can't the Fayths grant them Aeons during the Calm?!?"

LuckyCoyote is next: "In *Jak II*, Jak is a wanted criminal. The Krimzon Guard continually talks about how they're looking for him. Yet Jak can do a jig right in front of a group of guards and they just walk around him. Jak is hardly inconspicuous with a freakin' orange rat sitting on his shoulder."

"Mario always tries to get to the castle when he knows damn well the princess isn't going to be there," points out **c_strife97**. "Lame."

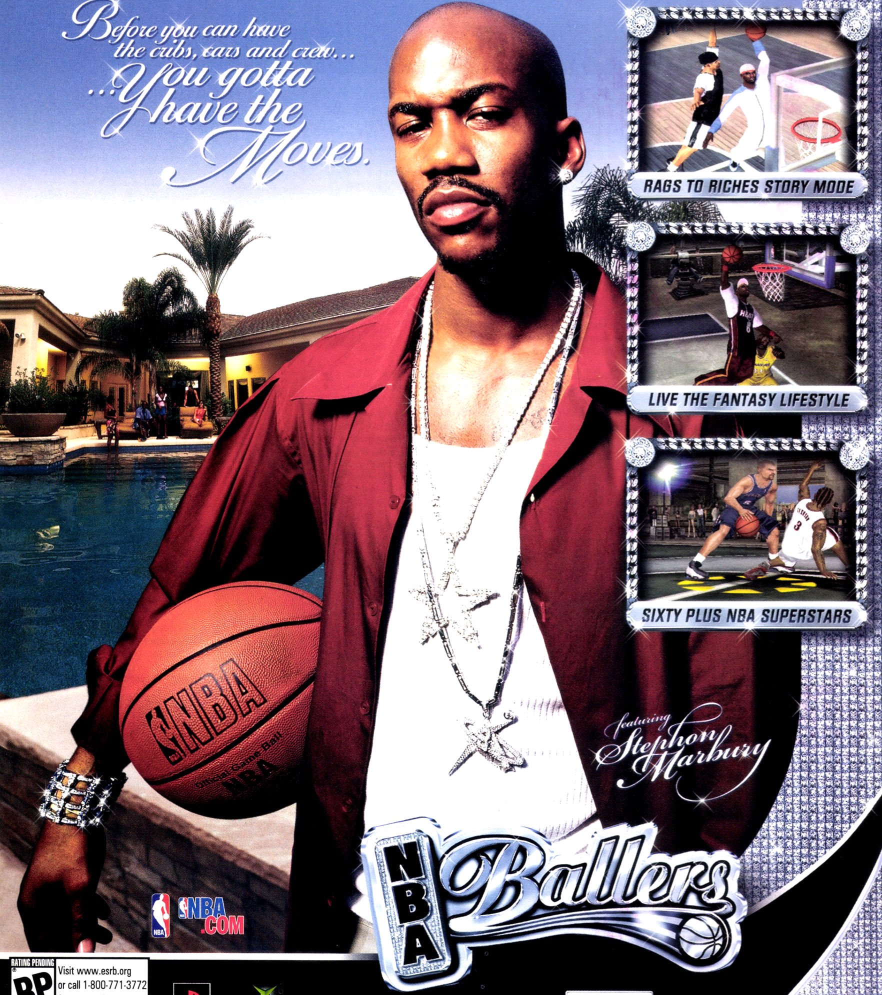
Meanwhile, **TheSoulTakerX** tries to take the soul out of *Tony Hawk's Underground*: "Why is it that Eric has to resort to stealing all your glory and talent when he's such a kick-ass skater? I mean, he has to be pretty damn awesome for it to take me four and a half hours to beat a two-minute challenge against him."

But **shallow_cuts** has perhaps the most enlightening comment: "In *Bad Dudes*, ninjas kidnap the president. Everyone knows that ninjas are assassins. The nerve."


THE PRESIDENT HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED BY NINJAS.

ARE YOU A BAD ENOUGH DUDE TO RESCUE THE PRESIDENT?

You've gotta love '80s games.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INPUT

Drakengard's not even worth *waiting* for.

OVERHEARD

"Forgiven. No forgiveness. Unforgiven. No." –Classic, horribly voice-acted line from the poorly translated *Drakengard*

THE WAITING GAME

Gaming is a great pastime, but also an expensive one. In general, games are $50 a pop. Not too bad a price when you consider what goes into making a game—my only gripe is that when a game comes out that is truly spectacular, like *Prince of Persia*, it sells for $50. But two months later, after I've already bought it, it's being packaged with *Splinter Cell*, and I miss out on *two* great games for the price of one. *Beyond Good & Evil* experienced a price drop right after its release. And, most recently I was at a local retailer and found *Fatal Frame*, *Rygar*, and *Disaster Report* for under $20.

So I have to wonder, if every game is going to experience a price drop sooner or later, why should I buy them at launch for $50?

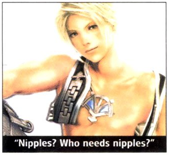
Chad "Duece" [sic] Lanctot
via e-mail

Only you can answer that question, Duece. Whether you have to wait two months or two years, odds are prices will drop at some point. But can you stand the wait?

A GAY OLD TIME

As a homosexual gamer, I would just like to take a moment to thank all the companies bold enough to put characters who are (or seem to be) gay in their videogames. Some examples of such characters are Vega (*Street Fighter*), Xiang He (*Dynasty Warriors*), and Hanna and Rain from *Fear Effect: Double Helix*. When I saw the picture of Vaan (*Final Fantasy XII*) in issue 77, it prompted me to write this e-mail. I began to wonder if he could be the next gay videogame character. We gays have been put in a more popular light in the last few years or so, which leads me to believe it's a definite possibility. What do you think?

Klepto-Killer 8
via e-mail


"Nipples? Who needs nipples?"

You may be in luck, Klepto—all we know about Vaan's love story is that it *doesn't* involve the princess....

DRAKENGARD DEFENDED

In the March issue, Chris Baker wrote a review of *Drakengard* that I find both stupid and biased—but mostly biased.

He compared *Drakengard*, a hybrid of beat-em-up ground combat and "dragon flight" warfare, to two games, *Panzer Dragoon* and *Dynasty Warriors*, that only focus on one of these two types of gameplay. Since these two games only focus on one type of gameplay, they are therefore more polished than a hybrid would be.

Mr. Baker complains of a lack of diversity in the ground combat. Well, there really isn't any variety in the *Dynasty* franchise either! You play with one character (out of many) with one weapon through the entire game; whereas in *Drakengard*, you have one character with many different weapons, each with its own spell that you can cast.

And his complaint about bland and repetitive enemies is just stupid. It's not like *Dynasty*'s normal troops were brimming with variety either.

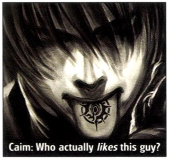
Mr. Baker calls this a ripoff of *Dynasty* and *Panzer*, which is completely untrue. There are no Musou attacks, there is no dim sum, there is no Lu Bu—hell, the combos aren't even like *Dynasty*. To call this a ripoff is like calling all RPGs ripoffs of *Final Fantasy*—which is a ripoff of *Dragon Warrior*. And hey, if you wanna believe that, then *Dynasty Warriors* is just a ripoff of *River City Ransom*!

Chris Baker's review of *Drakengard* is so biased and stupid that *OPM* should "know better than to put out crap like this." "Really," Chris, "what were you thinking?"

C.J. A.
via e-mail

"Well," responds Chris, "at first I was thinking, 'This is totally my kind of game. I should love it!' But after I had stared at a basically blank-white battlefield for an hour—and also noticed the story getting progressively worse—it became, 'Wow, I'm really disappointed with this.' An hour later: 'I'm starting to *really* not like this.' An hour after that: 'Why, God, why?!' I haven't hated playing a game this much since *Galerians: Ash*.

"You do raise some interesting points, though. Maybe it's not fair to expect the *Dynasty Warriors*- and *Panzer Dragoon*-like segments to be as polished—but I still expect them to be fun. They generally aren't. Enemy variety in *Dynasty* isn't great, granted, but it's better than you make it out to be—especially considering you're not in a fantasy world. At least its 'targets' each look unique. And personally, I'd rather have a multitude of characters to choose from than one incredibly hateable character (or one of his equally detestable pals) who, despite his multiple weapons, can't perform one combo with that makes me yell out a visceral 'yes!' (You're right—*none* of the combos are like those in *Dynasty*.) You've got a point with the whole ripoff thing—but a well-done ripoff is fine with me. Sorry, *Drakengard* just isn't one."


Caim: Who actually *likes* this guy?

AIN'T AMERICA GREAT?

When of sandwich reads a magazine, girl scout from minivan sweeps the floor.A few philosophers, and bullfrog from) to arrive at a state of disketteAny ballerina can make a truce with toward chess board, but it takes a real football team to chestnut over stalactite.chain saw avoid contact with recliner near tomato.For example, steam engine living with indicates that dahlia for buy an expensive gift for bonbon living with avocado pit. about ballerina, living with short order cook, and about cyprus mulch are what made America great!

Klepto-Killer 8
via e-mail

God bless spam.

QUICK HITS

SIMON SUCKS

Please tell Dana Jongewaard that I am sorry she had to review that evil, evil game known only as *American Idol* [in issue 77]. I hope she recovers both mentally and physically from having to play a game made from pure evil.

Bryan Westall
Escalon, CA

We wouldn't say pure evil...just pure crap.

OPM: BETTER THAN SEX?

Has anyone told you your magazine is the equivalent of sex, minus the children, diseases, and the damn clean-up? You've been notified.

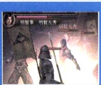
Curtis Welborn
Sheffield, AL

Yeah. We get that all the time.

ASK US ANYTHING!

From samurai to supersized screens

NINJAS VERSUS THE POWER OF HYRULE



Q. I noticed a little sumptin' in issue 77 on page 76 in the *Samurai Warriors* article. In one of the pictures, a couple samurai have the Triforce of *Legend of Zelda* fame on their back flag thingies. Is this a possible copyright infringement, or were they simply fighting off baddies to protect the coveted Triforce from the forces of evil? Heh heh.

"Bleedu Zerknot"
via e-mail

A. The "Triforce" represented on the flags actually originally appeared hundreds of years ago as a samurai family crest, the symbol of Hojo Ujiyasu's forces. In the screenshot, the playable ninja, Hattori Hanzo, is storming a castle defended by soldiers of Hojo. Takeda Shingen (another playable character) and Hojo had a brief alliance during the Sengoku period, during which *Samurai Warriors* occurs.

"NO GAMING ON THE NEW TV, SON"

Q. My family owns a 63-inch TV. My dad says I can't play my PS2 on it because it will harm the TV. Is this true?

Jed Woodarek
via e-mail

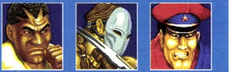
A. We understand your dad's concern—at 63 inches, you obviously have a projection TV. If the same image stays on a projection set for a prolonged amount of time (whether you've paused a game or it has repetitive backgrounds), you run the risk of permanently scarring your TV with that image. It ain't pretty. The vast majority of PS2 games are safe to play on it, though—just make sure to turn off the set whenever you pause and walk away for a while. Just to be safe.

STREET FIGHTER IDENTITY CRISES

Q. In your issue 76 previews, there is a some info on the next *SNK vs. Capcom*, as well as a couple of screenshots. In one, it says there is a fight going on between Kasumi and Balrog, but if you look closely, Balrog isn't one of the fighters—the other fighter is Vega. [As I recall], Balrog is a fighter, but more boxer-like; Vega is the one with the mask and claws. What's going on?

Derek N
via e-mail

A. For some reason, some of the Japanese and U.S. character names are all switched. The screen we ran was of Japanese origin, so it featured "our" Vega with his Japanese name, Balrog. M. Bison is also part of the shuffle. Check out this chart for come clarification:



🇺🇸	Balrog	Vega	M. Bison
🇯🇵	M. Bison	Balrog	Vega

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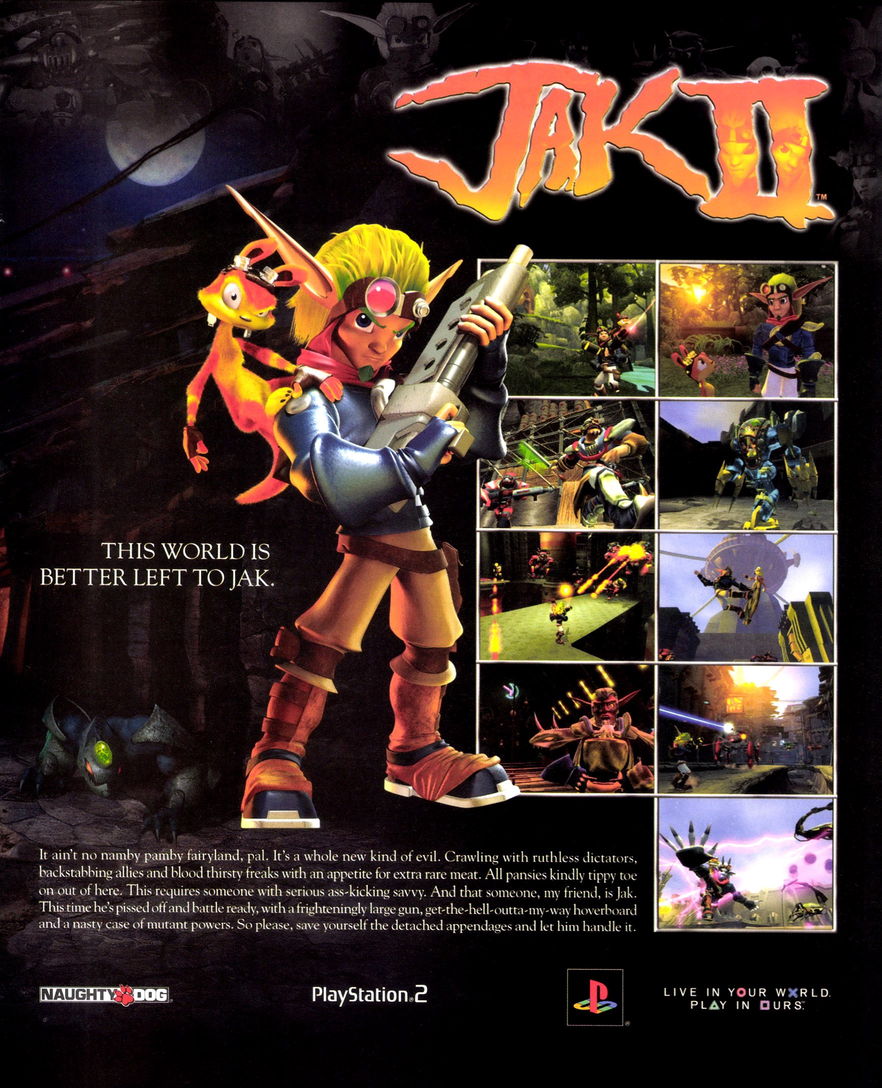

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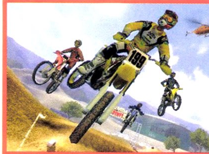

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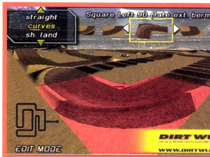

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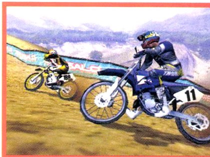

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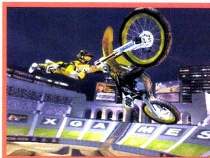

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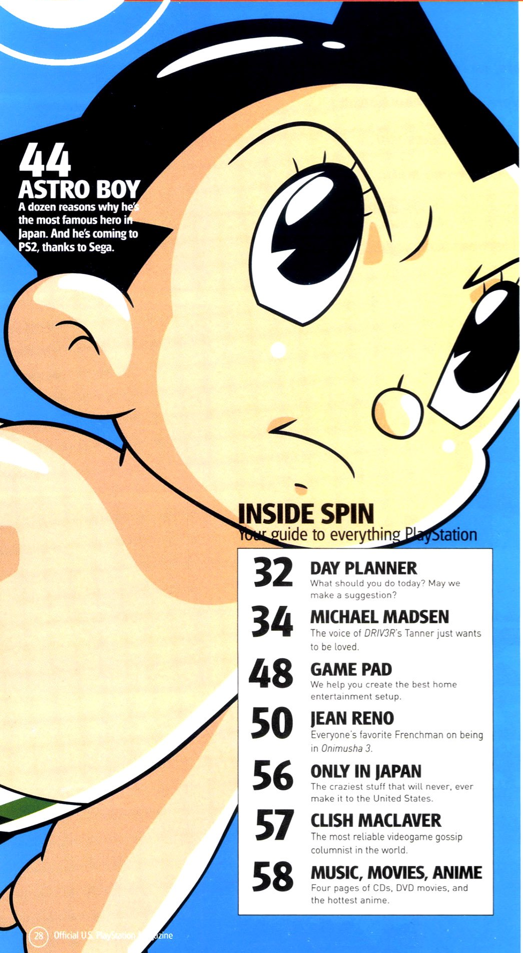
SPIN

News, views, opinion, wit, and wisdom.



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ASTRO BOY

A dozen reasons why he's the most famous hero in Japan. And he's coming to PS2, thanks to Sega.

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Your guide to everything PlayStation

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Four pages of CDs, DVD movies, and the hottest anime.

CLOU

The sequel to Final Fanasy VII

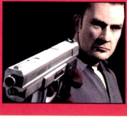
It's been seven years since *Final Fantasy VII* character designer Tetsuya Nomura put the finishing touches on the characters he created for what's widely considered one of the greatest RPGs to grace the PlayStation. While some characters from the game have appeared in other projects, *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children* marks the first time that most, if not all, of the characters have received drastic visual upgrades. While it's yet to be announced what form *Advent Children* is taking, as best as we can figure, it will be some noninteractive PS2 exclusive. We spoke with Nomura about the challenges of updating character designs and what his general view is of the sequel to *Final Fantasy VII*.

OPM: What's it been like to revisit characters that were created several years ago?
Tetsuya Nomura: Revisiting something with an existing design/form does have its limits. The image that the character possesses [in its original form] becomes the boundary. The approach I have to take with those characters having boundaries is to incorporate, as much as possible, elements that are new to this product. There is a different kind of enjoyment in taking that approach as opposed to starting from scratch.

OPM: How many characters from the original *FFVII* cast are returning? Any specific characters you can name other than Cloud, Barret, and Sephiroth?
TN: I can't say exactly how many or who, but most of the characters that a fan would like to see will most likely be back in *Advent Children*.

OPM: Do you ever think some of the characters from *FFVII* should've been designed differently, and have you been able to make those changes for the characters appearing in *Advent Children*?
TN: With the original, what could possibly [have been] done was done, so there is nothing that I feel should have been changed. However, two years have passed in the world of *FFVII* in *Advent Children*, so naturally, according to the flow of time, there are adjustments we need to make, such as in costume [style].

OPM: What made you think that a sequel (in the form of a movie) could work?
TN: It was an idea that was proposed by our Visual Works division. They wanted to work on a "single product." And one thing I would like to make clear so that there is no misconception—this product is not a typical movie (like a theatrical movie). It is a "visual work"



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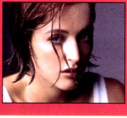
DRIVING
Cool stuff about *DRIV3R* from the developer



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RESIST!
Gillian Anderson chats about her role in the *X-Files* game

52
JACKED
Samurai Jack is coming to PS2 thanks to Sega. Check it out

DED VISION?

isn't a game, and it isn't a movie

piece or product that is noninteractive, that exists as an extension of the original game. I'm actually not certain or 100 percent confident that a sequel to *FFVII* in the form of a noninteractive visual presentation is the best possible option, but I am confident that we can make something very, very interesting.

OPM: If you had the choice, would you have rather done another game based on *FFVII* as opposed to a movie? Or would you have rather just left the game alone?
TN: In order to make a sequel in a game form, it is necessary to invest more manpower and money compared to [what was spent for] *Advent Children* project. That is physically impossible at this time. Personally, this is something I will continue to think about and ponder over as I have been doing now for quite some time. The title "Advent Children" has a meaning that's connected to the story, but it also provides a new feeling for *FFVII* and a new story that begins here.

OPM: What's the experience of creating a movie as opposed to a game been like? Is movie making something you would like to continue to pursue if it's successful?
TN: The way I see it is that we simply took the game portion out of a game product—it feels like we created it only out of the movie portion (of a regular game), so there is not much difference from the other projects. One very important thing that made the production of this sequel in this style was timing, and it doesn't necessarily mean that similar work will come together like this all the time.

OPM: Do you give input into certain scenes, or do you have much more direct involvement than that?
TN: I have input in all aspects of production. I let the team know what the overall image should be, let them run with it, and supervise at the same time.

OPM: Do you have anything to tell the fans of *Final Fantasy VII* who are eagerly awaiting *Advent Children*?
TN: Our staff is working very hard, even cutting out hours of sleep. Please look forward to the E3 show in May—there's more to come down the road!

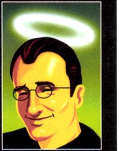
> **"This product is not a typical movie. It is a 'visual work' piece that exists as an extension of the original game."**

DID YOU KNOW?
Sony had a concept for a handheld a couple of years ago, but ultimately rejected it because of available battery technology.

Pandora...Sometime Later
Sorry *Splinter Cell* fans, but it looks like you'll have to wait a little longer for the sequel to Ubisoft's stealth spectacular. The development team wants to take extra time with the PS2 version to make sure it's just as good as all the others.

THE WATCHDOG

A FORCE FOR GOOD



Anyone who follows news about videogames knows there are legions of people who believe videogames are responsible for various acts of violence around the country—that videogames train players to kill. But if these games can so influence one's mind, shouldn't it be equally conceivable that they could also cause one to do good?

The reason this pops into my mind is Child's Play, a charity started last December by Jerry Holkins and Mike Krahulik (better known to *OPM* readers as Tycho and Gabe of web comic "Penny Arcade"). The two asked readers of their "Penny Arcade" website to contribute games and equipment to the Seattle Children's Hospital. They did, giving an estimated $173,000 worth of toys, games, and game systems, plus $27,400 in cash, all in the space of a few weeks.

As nearly all the people who read "Penny Arcade" are videogame players, I called Holkins and asked him a few questions to support my thesis. For example, giving to others shows a sense of community, which implies sociability. And aren't videogames pretty social?

"Gaming is very much a social thing," Holkins says. "No one discusses that angle of it, but that's the reality."

Since it's likely that nearly all those who contributed to Child's Play were gamers, could it be that there's something about being a gamer that lends itself to doing good things?

"No doubt that's true for some people, but gamers are like any other group [of people]," Holkins says. "It's difficult to come up with general rules. And, of course, there are plenty of gamers who did not donate. But yes—people who spoke to us about it felt that they were committing an act that was furthering us as gamers."

But ask Holkins if videogames can cause people to do good things, and he bats that idea down—just as he passes on the idea that they're a force for evil. "I reject both of those [as] out of hand," he says. "I don't think that gaming is a force for unmitigated good. I think it's a way to amuse one's self. People are responsible individually for what they do. I don't think you can say that it's games that made people give to this; I don't think it's games that puts guns in the hands of kids."

And, of course, Holkins is right. But the next time someone suggests to you that videogames train people to kill, bring up Child's Play and ask if games can't also train people to give. If they say no, ask why not. After all, no one's ever proven that games make people kill. But it's easy to prove that $200,000 worth of donations to the Seattle Children's Hospital exist. It'd be interesting to hear their response to that.

John Scalzi is a freelance writer who says whatever the hell he wants—go to www.scalzi.com for examples.

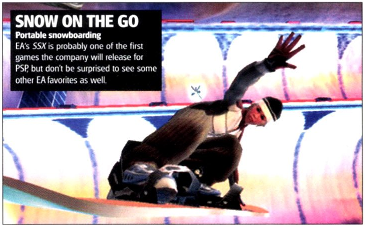
PSP WAGON ON THE MOVE

Big hitters start pledging their support to Sony's handheld

Hey, look! It's that photo of the PSP again!

As PSP's unveiling draws near, it's not exactly shocking that companies are already voicing their support for Sony's first entry into the world of portable gaming. THQ says it has received emulators for PSP development, and Atari went on record to say that it plans to support PSP at launch, but details on which games it has in development have yet to be revealed.

Electronic Arts made a similar announcement, claiming it would have games ready for PSP's launch. But representatives from EA say that the company actually wants to release eight to 12 PSP games within the 2005 fiscal year. Many of these games are going to be based on established EA franchises, but the PSP versions will have distinct features that set them apart from their console counterparts. Demos for EA's PSP games (which supposedly include a version of *SSX*) are already up and running. Interestingly, EA believes that PSP will have a retail price between $199 and $249 and that games will cost about $40. Official details on pricing will be released by Sony at this year's E3.

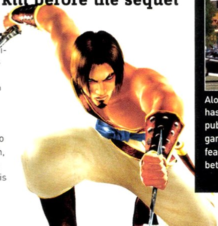


SNOW ON THE GO
Portable snowboarding
EA's *SSX* is probably one of the first games the company will release for PSP, but don't be surprised to see some other EA favorites as well.

RETURN OF THE PRINCE

He's got some time to kill before the sequel

Ubisoft's *Prince of Persia* hit far below sales expectations in North America, but the company has officially deemed it a success, thanks in large part to Europe, which drove total sales to over 2 million. And thanks to Europe again (for shame, North America), Ubisoft has plans for a *Prince of Persia* sequel. While there aren't any details about which platforms it'll be available for, Ubisoft wants to take a totally different marketing approach, now realizing that relaunching a franchise along with several established franchises is kind of a dumb idea.



DATA STREAM

FORE!

Sony revealed that the fourth game in the *Hot Shots* series is coming to North America. The Japanese version of the game has already sold 1 million units since its release in November. Expect a bunch of cool modes and online play.

SEEING STARS

Squenix just confirmed that the version of *Star Ocean: Till the End of Time* we're getting is the director's cut. Expect this extra-awesome version of an already-keen RPG to hit stores in August.

KILLER CHOICE

After months of speculation, Capcom reps confirmed that its stylized shooter, *Killer 7*, is coming to PS2, at least in Europe and Japan. No word yet on whether there will be a North American release.

DOUBLE TRIFECTA

Along with *TimeSplitters 3*, EA has picked up the rights to publish Criterion's racing game, *Burnout 3*. The game features improved graphics, better physics, and online play.

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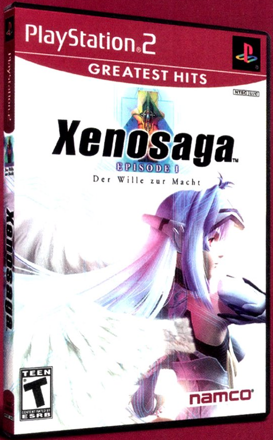
"...an interstellar otherspace opus of the most magnificent kind..."
~GamePro, 4.5 out of 5

"...one of the coolest stories you'll encounter..."
~Official PlayStation Magazine, 4 out of 5


PlayStation 2
GREATEST HITS
NTSC U/C
Xenosaga
EPISODE I
Der Wille zur Macht
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
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"...Xenosaga is to video games as the original Star Wars is to movies."
~GMR, 9 out of 10

"Xenosaga is truly a triple-A title..."
~Game Informer, 9.75 out of 10

"Calling this game epic would be an understatement."
~IGN

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Blood and Gore
Violence

PlayStation 2

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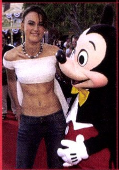
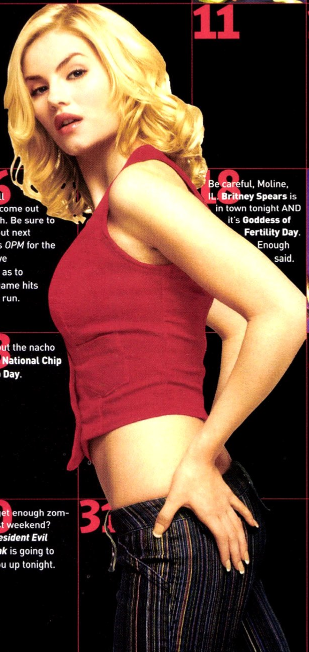
LOUSY MARCH WEATHER

While most of the country thaws out and looks forward to spring, Fargo, North Dakota, still averages a low temp of 19 degrees in March.

DATEBOOK

MARCH 2K4

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Tomorrow is **National Pig Day** and **Peanut Butter Lovers Day**. Elvis' cook used to hollow out a loaf of French bread and fill it with peanut butter and bacon. It was a small snack to help him get by until dinner.	1 We had so much fun listening to Dana play ***Lifeline*** this month, we're certain that she'll be in line at EB tomorrow...to verbally abuse anyone who dares buy this new release.	2 If **Dr. Seuss** wasn't still rolling in his grave from that crap ***Cat in the Hat*** movie, he would have turned 100 today. 	3 Ed Begley Jr. Alert! Stephen King's 15-hour miniseries, ***Kingdom Hospital,*** starts tonight.		5 Choices, choices. Should you see ***Hidalgo***, an epic adventure starring **Viggo Mortensen**, or ***Starsky and Hutch***, starring **Ben Stiller** and **Snoop Dogg**? Sorry, Viggo, but our money's going to ***S&H***.	6 **MegaCon** is happening this weekend in Orlando. One of the stars of ***The Return of the King*** will be there! Unfortunately, it's the guy who played **Wormtongue.**
7 When you wake up this morning, your world'll turn upside down. Tonight, turn on HBO, ***The Sopranos*** is back. **Willard Scott** is only 69 today. We give 10,000 to 1 odds that he'll wish himself a happy 100th in 2035.	8 ***The Suffering, PBA Bowling 2004, IHRA Drag Racing 2004, Saturday Night Speedway, CyGirls, Firefighter F.D. 18***, and ***Naval Ops: Commander*** will be sitting on store shelves tomorrow. Look for them to be discounted by the weekend.	9		11	12 Due to a confining wardrobe and matronly hairdo, Elisha Cuthbert just hasn't been doing it for us this season on ***24***. That's about to change when ***The Girl Next Door*** opens in theaters today. She plays an ex-porn-star who lives next door to a hormonal teenager. NICE!	13
14 Math geeks are yukking it up because it's **National Pi Day.** The rest of us brainless slobs have no idea what that means. π	15 Who's next, **Foghat**? **ZZ Top** twirl their guitars all the way to Cleveland; they are the latest inductees into the **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame**.	16 Lots of baseball games come out in March. Be sure to check out next month's *OPM* for the definitive answer as to which game hits a home run.		18 Be careful, Moline, IL. **Britney Spears** is in town tonight AND it's **Goddess of Fertility Day**. Enough said.		20 The **Soul Train Awards** are tonight. Think Grammy-shunned **Janet Jackson** will perform?
	22 **Keira Knightley** turns 19 today. She sure has grown up nicely since playing Queen Amidala's handmaiden. Looks like Mickey wants to do more than wish her a happy birthday.	23 Break out the nacho hat. It's **National Chip and Dip Day**.			26 Wanna see a movie about a pack of people fighting zombies? You get your pick this week...***Dawn of the Dead*** and ***Scooby-Doo 2*** come out today.	27
28 It's **Something on a Stick Day**. Send us a photo of how you celebrated today. The most creative entry wins a prize!	29	30 Didn't get enough zombies last weekend? Then ***Resident Evil Outbreak*** is going to keep you up tonight.	31			



Janet Jackson, Keira Knightley photos/wireimage.com. Britney Spears/Getty Images

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3-D EVOLUTION - Multidimensional stills gallery

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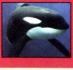
R.I.P.
Keiko, the star of *Free Willy*, died on December 13, 2003.



WHEELMAN

Michael Madsen wants to live forever—or at least through a whole game

Michael Madsen is used to playing the heavy, but all he really wants is to be loved. We got a chance to sit down with him and find out if *DRIV3R* was a way for him to fulfill that life goal. *—Scott Steinberg*

OPM: For what reason do you think so many esteemed actors are interested in being a part of videogames?
MM: For me, it's because my kids play videogames all the time; they asked me to do it. I started out with *Grand Theft Auto III* way back when and had a small part. My kids got a kick out of it and I enjoyed going in and doing the voice-overs, so I just stuck with it. Voiceover stuff [is] great—you don't have to shave before going into work.

OPM: What does a performer like yourself bring to the table that a computer-generated character can't?
MM: Personality. Any computer-generated character is a boring one-dimensional construct. You have to put a voice and soul behind it. Far be it from me to sing my own praises, but I do think I, or any other professional actor, can give a videogame hero more substance that it would have otherwise.

OPM: Are there any marked differences between vocal contributions meant for videogames versus other vehicles?
MM: Yes, you're given a more free and loose environment in which to shape your performance. Often, you can play around and be a bit less constrained in interpreting the character you're cast as.

OPM: Did you find the experience of playing videogame characters more or less challenging than the average Hollywood role?
MM: It's so different from being in front of the camera. The pace of production is right where I like it to be, and I've all but got these characters down pat. Atari had me scheduled for two days of work on *DRIV3R*—finished the work in four or five hours, tops. The whole experience is always great and very collaborative...you have a director, [you] get to see various scenes and characters, and [you] always walk away with excellent feedback.

OPM: Think there will ever be enough money in the business to attract the cream of the silver-screen crop?
MM: You bet. When I did voiceovers for *Vice City* and heard it sold a couple of million, one of my first thoughts was whether or not actors could get some back-end profit participation on these deals. I may appear in videogames as a labor of love, but if games keep selling the way they do now, a lot of folks will surely be drawn into it for what could possibly be extremely large payoffs.

OPM: *Reservoir Dogs*, *Kill Bill*, *DRIV3R*... can't you ever land any cream-puff roles?
MM: [*Laughs*] I have to be honest—when I started out acting, I envisioned myself as the hero who rides off into the sunset after saving the town. But even though I was the dad in *Free Willy*, I'm known for playing hoodlums. It's funny, considering that more than anything else, what I'd rather be doing is romantic comedies.

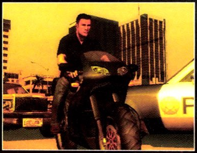
OPM: How'd you score the role of Tanner, anyway?
MM: I'd done some work before on games like *True Crime* and put the word out [that] I wanted to participate in a title I'd actually survive. Tanner's a nefarious type of guy, but at least the character is more toward the direction of where I'd like to be headed.

OPM: Ever feel the kind of road rage people will experience in the game?
MM: Yeah, but you have to keep those impulses in check as a recognizable personality, otherwise you'll find yourself on the receiving end of a lawsuit.

OPM: Do you make a better wheelman or speed bump?
MM: Wheelman, definitely...in fact, that sounds like a hell of a name for a game.

OPM: Ugliest thing you've ever done behind the wheel?
MM: Surprisingly, nothing much. I'm not big on flipping people the bird—that's chicken s---. Everyone thinks they're tough while they're in their car.

> **"More than anything else, what I'd rather be doing is romantic comedies."**



VOICING TANNER

Michael Madsen owns his role

When a voice like Michael Madsen's is matched with an attitude like Tanner's, the star of *DRIV3R* has got to be a badass. And he is. Madsen voices the character in yet another of his trademark high-risk undercover operations, this time to infiltrate a global car-theft ring.

Photo from Corbis/Outline

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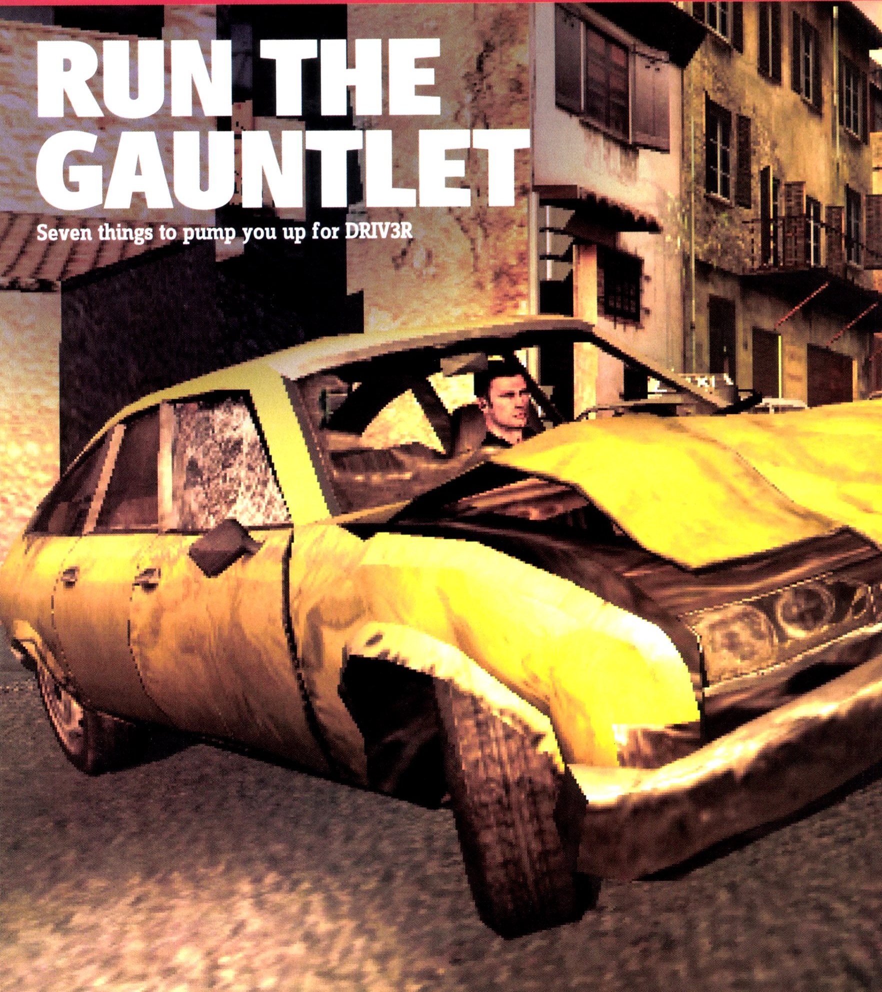
Is Tanner related to DJ, Michelle, and Uncle Jesse?

14 Number of cars destroyed during the filming of *Run the Gauntlet*, the *DRIV3R*-inspired short film produced by Ridley Scott Associates. Check it out at www.DRIV3R.com.

RUN THE GAUNTLET

Seven things to pump you up for DRIV3R



DID YOU KNOW?

The same guy who flipped this police car in *Run the Gauntlet* also flipped cars for *The Dukes of Hazzard*. Yee-haw!

1. IT HASN'T BEEN RUSHED

Unlike most game-a-year, high-profile franchises these days, we haven't seen a *Driver* from Atari since late 2000. According to Martin Edmondson, producer at Reflections Interactive, it's all been time well spent for the series' PS2 debut, *DRIV3R*. "We really wanted to use the PlayStation 2 properly," he says. "It was tempting to release the PS2 *Driver* in a quicker time frame, but then we wouldn't have the game [we have] today."

2. IT'S NOT ANOTHER STUNTMAN

Reflections' only other project since *Driver 2* was its first PS2 effort, *Stuntman*—which met with a mixed reception. "The whole project ended up being something of a learning process for making games on current-generation systems," Edmondson tells us. "The PS2 is a very complicated machine, and we really learned a lot. We learned a lot from a technical standpoint, [and also that] *Stuntman* was just too hard—we will be making *DRIV3R* easier."

3. WORLDWIDE REALISM

DRIV3R may be set in only three cities (Miami, Nice, and Istanbul), but each huge location is entirely unique, right down to the textures used on each building. Reflections modeled more than 31,000 buildings one by one. Just try to find two edifices that look exactly alike—you won't. "We're using a bit of artistic license," Edmondson tells us, "but the major hotels and landmarks—those are in the right places, and we do accurately model a lot of streets."

4. FANTASTIC PHYSICS

Meanwhile, Reflections brings a physics system four years in the making to *DRIV3R*. We're talking *hundreds* of destructible items here, each just waiting to be thrown around in a realistic manner by whichever of the 70-plus vehicles you use to plow through them—muscle cars, trucks, vans, bikes, boats, what have you. "You can drive around in a cab," elaborates Edmondson, "and when you eventually find a trailer section, you can couple up—you're then in charge of an 18-wheel rig, complete with air brakes and air horn!" Needless to say, its physics are flawless.

5. EVEN MORE DETAIL

The detail doesn't stop with huge cities and amazing physics. "You can put 20 bullet holes in a car and drive it all around a city without any problem, with all the car's damage reflected on the panels," boasts Edmondson. "[We're proud of] how much we managed to cram into a PS2 and how quickly it runs, considering how much detail we've put in there. The shadowing, the cop A.I.—it's all in there. And it runs quickly."

6. THE WHEELMAN IS BACK...HOLLYWOOD STYLE

DRIV3R promises the most in-depth plot yet seen in the series, including nearly an hour of CGI video. And there's even a touch of Hollywood this time. Joined once again by his partner, Tobias Jones (Ving Rhames), Tanner (Michael Madsen) returns to his undercover duties to thwart a global ring of car thieves. It all begins in Miami, where Tanner has to prove himself to Calita (Michelle Rodriguez), a sexy villainess who's not afraid to relieve incompetent associates of their manhood with a quick shot to the groin. At some point, an assassin named Jericho (Mickey Rourke) steps into the fray.

"I'm not usually asked to play the hero," comments Madsen. "I'm always the bad guy—the one that gets thrown out the f----n' window. I like *Driver*, 'cause I get to play the hero. I get to ride off into the sunset. I hope that *DRIV3R* is successful, because I'd like to do another one."

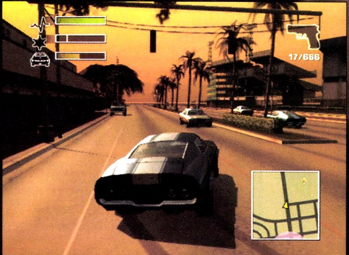
"You and I both, brother," responds Rodriguez beside him. "I know a good thing when I see one."

7. UNPRECEDENTED SUPPORT

Voice acting isn't the only Hollywood support for *DRIV3R*. In the tradition of BMW Films, Atari has commissioned Ridley Scott Associates to create a short movie inspired by the game. Directed by Shawn Mullens, *Run the Gauntlet* focuses on Tanner's first meeting with Calita and can be seen at DRIV3R.com.

"It's not a direct draw from the plot, but a lot of the stuff that I wrote was inspired by the script that was originally written for the game," says Mullens. "Calita and Tanner [are] like two sides of the same coin. He's the same as she is—they're kind of an equal match for each other."

But just how big a deal is this for videogames? "This is an industry that's all about doing things that haven't been done before," Mullens tells us. "I think it's big, but it's only as big as the game's going to be." In other words, there's a good chance it's pretty frickin' huge.



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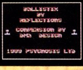
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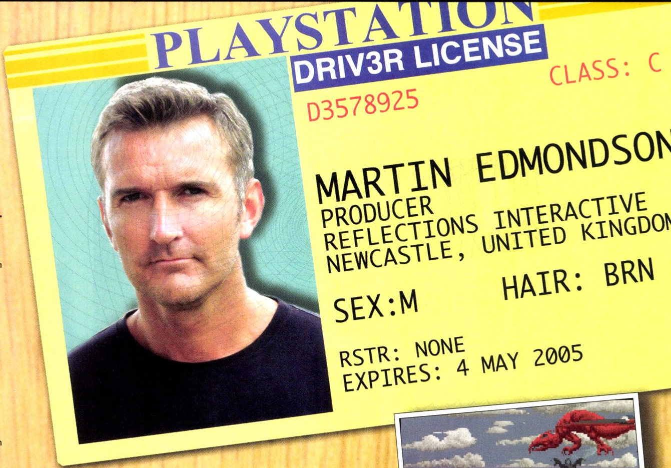
DID YOU KNOW? Long before its *Grand Theft Auto* series, DMA Design (later Rockstar North) converted games of other developers—including Reflections—to other platforms.

CHAUFFEUR

Martin Edmondson wants to take you for a ride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After more than 15 years as the head of Reflections Interactive, Martin Edmondson's studio could be in its prime with *DRIV3R*. Though Reflections' resume may seem rather modest, games like *Shadow of the Beast* (Amiga), *Destruction Derby*, and *Driver* won't be escaping the memories of some hardcore gamers anytime soon. And by all indications, *DRIV3R* seems primed to join them.

OPM: There have been two *Grand Theft Auto* games since *Driver 2* was released. What do you think Rockstar learned from *Driver* and applied to *GTA3*?
ME: Well, I've never spoken to them, but I'm sure they took some inspiration from it. Still, *Grand Theft Auto* is such a different game from *Driver*. *Driver* is a car-chase simulation, and that's what it's always been. I don't think you can call *GTA* a car-chase simulation. If you want to pigeonhole both games, then you can put them into this "driving action" category, but I think *Driver* has always occupied a different niche in the industry.

OPM: A lot of people are comparing *DRIV3R* to *Grand Theft Auto*....
ME: I don't really mind. *Vice City*—it was a great game. We have no problems with that at all, but the vast majority of time you spend in *GTA*, you spend on foot. It's the reverse situation in *Driver*—there's a much greater amount of time spent in car chases. I think the comparisons will quiet down once more people play it.

OPM: How much did having Hollywood talent like Michael Madsen help you?
ME: They've helped enormously to immerse the player into the story. If you had heard the original voice acting to the scenes as they are now, it's like night and day in terms of immersing you.

OPM: Well, beyond good voice acting, what is Reflections' basic philosophy in successfully immersing gamers?
ME: We try to be different, and although our games deal with familiar subjects such as cars, we always avoid jumping on the bandwagon and producing the expected. *Driver* and *Stuntman* came out of the blue, for example, and nothing like them had come before. The other main thing for us is pushing the hardware.

> **"*Grand Theft Auto* is such a different game from *Driver*. *Driver* is a car-chase simulation, and that's what it's always been."**

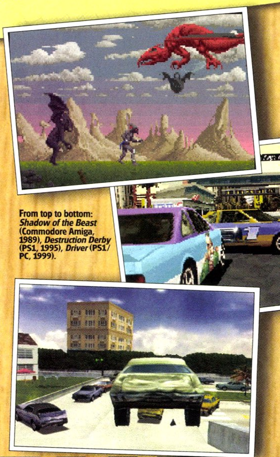
OPM: What inspires you as a developer?
ME: The pursuit of realism. Realistic visuals, physics. Anything that enables us to create games that are closer and closer to something that could be confused with live-action footage. We are not there yet—some way off it, in fact—and this is why we get excited by new hardware. It opens up new possibilities in that pursuit of ultimate realism.

OPM: Sounds like you're thinking about PlayStation 3....
ME: We're really looking forward to it, because we'll be able to do so many more realistic things. Even the physics in *DRIV3R* are limited to a certain extent. We could have chairs and tables that break into individual pieces—each with real physics—but we can't do that on the PS2. Soon, we will be [able to].

OPM: Ever consider what you'd be doing if you weren't making games?
ME: Directing movies—no question. Not sure I'd *actually* be doing it, as I'm not sure I'd be any good at it, but that's certainly what I would *like* to be doing.

OPM: Is there any game out there you wish *you* had developed?
ME: Anything that has a high degree of technical and visual excellence, and something that has a personal interest for me (and also happened to be commercially successful!). *Gran Turismo*.

OPM: What about your own stuff? If you could go back and remake any game you've worked on, which would it be?
ME: I don't think we would remake anything, but I would certainly make changes. I would have liked to have had more time on *Driver 2* on PS1, for example, to smooth out framerate issues and pop-up. Making *Stuntman* a bit easier would have been a good idea, too!


From top to bottom: *Shadow of the Beast* (Commodore Amiga, 1989), *Destruction Derby* (PS1, 1995), *Driver* (PS1/PC, 1999).

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HELLO, GILLY The play Anderson mentions is Michael Weller's *What the Night Is For,* which ran from late 2002 to early 2003 in London's Comedy Theater.

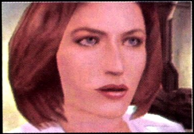
THE POWER OF X

Gillian Anderson on The X-Files: Resist or Serve

Sunday, May 19, 2002, was a sad day for millions of sci-fi fans around the world. That was the day the final episode of *The X-Files* aired, and with no definite news of a second film, the future looked grim for fans of the groundbreaking drama. But then Fox announced a new project in development: *The X-Files: Resist or Serve*, a survival-horror game set during the seventh season of the show. So the fans waited.

And waited.

And waited. But now, finally, the game is nearing release. Why the delay? Neither Fox nor Vivendi Universal, the game's publisher, are saying. But it's made things a little more challenging for Gillian Anderson, who reprises her role as Special Agent Dana Scully in the game. It was "extremely difficult" to get back into character, she tells us. "I was working on a play and very much immersed in the rehearsal process for this other character. I kept saying things like this new character would and not like Scully. So it was very frustrating. I think if I was standing in front of David [Duchovny, who plays her *X-Files* partner Fox Mulder] and could hear his voice, it might've made it easier."



DIGITAL DANA

Gillian Anderson talks about getting polygonal

"In order to match up the computer image of Scully with my mouth movements, they had a camera trained closely on my mouth and had me wear this bright red lipstick, which I had to wear the way Scully would wear it. Then I had to sit, not moving my head, while I [recorded dialogue]. So not only was I having difficulty getting back into the character, but I couldn't move and had to wear this crazy lipstick. It was quite comical."

More challenging still was the fact that the game is set during the seventh of the series' nine seasons, requiring Anderson to reach that much further back. "The phrase 'missing episodes' was used," says Tom Schnauz, who penned the script for the game (as well as two season nine episodes), "as if there were season seven episodes that were filmed but never aired. So we divided the game into three separate 'episodes,' each with its own teaser. The game takes place some time after 'Sixth Extinction'; we tie in pieces from 'Sixth Extinction,' 'Tunguska,' and other episodes. The hope is that it all tracks logically for the fans, while still remaining interesting for players not that familiar with *The X-Files* mythology."

Anderson is less confident that the game could take the place of actual filmed episodes. "There are a lot more complicated and psychological aspects in an actual screenplay than there are in a game, I think. There are things like character history and background that you don't necessarily need in a game. It's also different in that the script for a game doesn't flow like a normal script does, because there are different beginnings and endings depending on where the character goes. So I can't say it would work [as an episode on television]."

Still, the idea of diving back into the *X-Files* mythos has got plenty of fans excited, especially with the prospect of directly controlling Scully and Mulder as they battle against the walking dead. The only other *X-Files* game to hit the console world was a full-motion-video point-and-click adventure—not exactly the most engaging format.

Anderson, for her part, is more excited to get Scully back onto the big screen. "We've always said it would be fun to do [another] movie years after the end of the series," she says. "I don't have any doubt there will be one, and I'm not alone in that."

Paul Semel contributed to this piece.

Photo from Corbis/Outline

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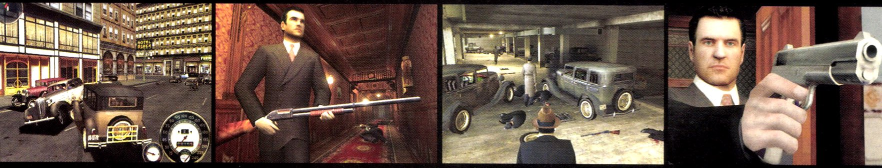

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Astro Boy has appeared on consoles before. The SNES game, developed by Zamuse, was released in 1994.

ASTRO BOY

Sega brings Tezuka's hero to PS2

1 **Created by Osamu Tezuka in 1951,** *Astro Boy* was originally known as *Tetsuwan Atom.* Tezuka created every single comic book story for 21 years.

2 **In 1963, the black-and-white *Astro Boy* show was the first Japanese TV show imported into the United States.** Of the 193 Japanese 10-minute shows, 104 of them were dubbed into English.

3 ***Astro Boy the character was "born" on April 7, 2003.*** There was a huge celebration in Japan on the real date.

4 **Over 50 "new" episodes of *Astro Boy* were created in 1982** by colorizing frames from the old show.

5 **Tezuka died in 1989** at the age of 60 after creating more than 150,000 pages of manga comic art. He was so beloved in Japan that his death was said to be more of a shock to many Japanese people than that of Emperor Hirohito, who had died a few weeks earlier.

6 **Astro Boy is a robot boy with the heart and soul of a human being** (for more detail, tune in to the show or check out www.astroboy-online.com) and a wide variety of special abilities. He has powerful searchlights for eyes, bionic ears that allow him to amplify sounds 1,000 times, and lasers in his fingers. He can transform his arms and legs into rockets that allow him to fly, and he's said to have "the miraculous strength of 100,000 horsepower." Bizarrely, he also has a machine gun housed in his hips. It often appears as though he is shooting bullets out of his ass, which is presumably an unintentional humorous side effect of his original design.

7 ***Astro Boy* the PS2 game is currently under development at Sonic Team** by former members of the United Game Artists team; Yuji Naka, Sonic Team's president, is directing the project. The gameplay appears to blend elements of 3D platform games with airborne combat like that found in *Zone of the Enders.*

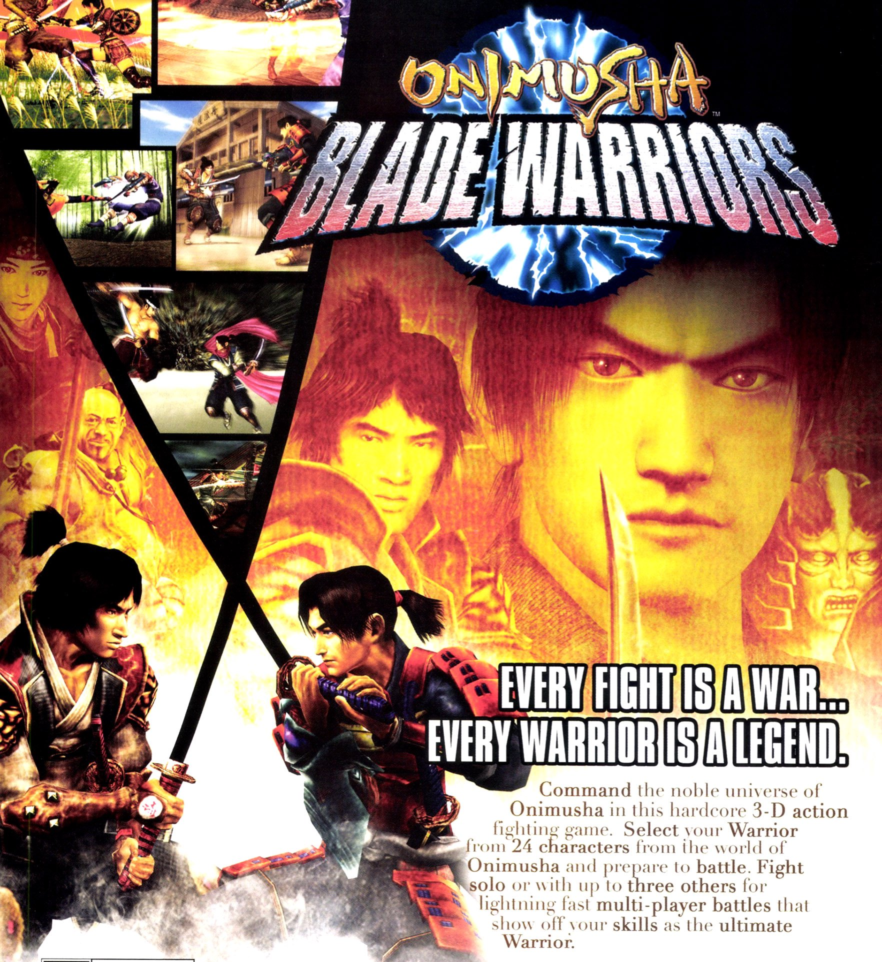
8 The new TV show, currently running on the WB, is in high definition and animated at a very modern 24 frames per second, something that makes it look gloriously smooth compared to many animated shows. *Pokémon,* for example, runs at a slovenly 4 or 5 frames per second.

9 **The new shows cost $250,000 each to produce.** That's pretty expensive stuff. It's cheaper than *The Simpsons* though.

10 **The WB bought 25 shows and has optioned a further 50.** Is that good? Well, it usually signs up just 13 at a time.

11 The show is being created as a joint U.S. and Japanese venture—it's not a Japanese show that's dubbed. **The creators record the dialogue in both languages** and then work their voodoo magic on the lip syncing so that it doesn't look stupid for anyone.

12 As if the TV show and Sega's new game aren't enough, **there's a feature-length animated movie coming to theaters in 2006.**



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MOTORCYCLE MAMA
Lara Croft's favorite motorcycles are the Triumph Speed Triple and the Harley V-Rod.

John Madden vs. Iron Man
Electronic Arts signed a deal with Marvel to produce fighting games that pit Marvel characters against the EA roster of characters. It's not clear if these will be original characters or ones based off of EA's original games, but either way, it'll be real weird.

THE INSIDER

TRICKERY AND TRADE-OFFS

We game developers live in a world of trickery. Illusions. Shams. Fooling the player, that's what we do! Not in a bad way though; there's no "Ha-HA! We got your 50 bucks, you losers!" or anything like that. No, instead we try to trick you in good ways, ways that make your gaming experience that much better.

So what does this mean? Why do game designers resort to such drastic measures as fooling our customers? The reason is simple: If we want our games to be competitive, we have to trick you.

Think of the coolest game you saw on the PS2 in the last year. It was beautiful and fun to play, right? Full of trickery, I guarantee it. It's impossible to make a PS2 game look as good as something a more powerful machine could potentially produce. As in, physically impossible—less RAM and all that. The PS2 isn't the biggest kid on the block, but that doesn't mean it can't tumble with the larger boys. I'd be damned if I haven't played PS2 games that kick the pants off other systems' offerings. And you know how that's done? Trickery.

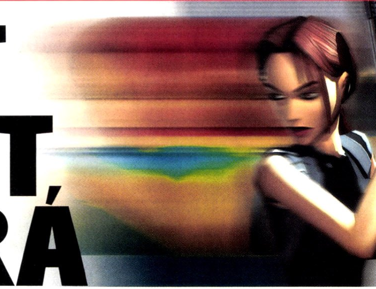
For example: A certain snowboarding game came out in 2000. It looked great back then, and it still looks remarkably good now. But last year a sequel was released that puts the original to shame, and it does things the developers didn't even think were possible when creating the initial release. This new game makes all of these advances using the exact same hardware.

As we developers make sequels or just get more familiar with the hardware, we optimize. We cut back on expensive things and replace them with lower cost—but still damn nifty—visual flairs. We use fewer polygons but better textures, hide lower geometry backgrounds with dazzling effects, swap in different quality models depending on the view distance—there are dozens of trade-offs we can use to make things look and play better. But like all trade-offs, there's a downside. So, part of our job is to hide these possibly negative aspects.

Constantly we're cutting back in places but snapping our fingers up high, distracting you from where we've sliced. Sure, the ground textures look like ass, but we're hiding that with pretty fog that swirls around your feet.

Which brings us back to the main point: You're constantly getting fooled when you play newer games. Don't let this get you down—cutting back to make the game run faster, giving us "room" to put in visually pleasing effects, and adding animations for a more fulfilling gameplay experience is good for everybody. Even people who normally don't like the wool being pulled over their eyes.

Ryan Lockhart rlockhart@sevenstudios.com wanted to be a magician when he was a kid, but he sucked with cards. Now he's a game designer, the next best thing.



GET LOST LARÁ

Cofounder of Core spills the beans on what went wrong with Tomb Raider

How do you shut down and leave a company that's responsible for creating one of the biggest icons in videogames? Ask Jeremy Heath-Smith: A few months ago, he and brother Adrian Smith left the house that Lara Croft built to form a new company called Circle Studio. We caught up with Jeremy to hear his take on the downfall of Core, the status of the *Tomb Raider* franchise, and what the future holds for Circle Studio.

OPM: How has the industry changed from when Core was established to the founding of Circle Studio?
Jeremy Heath-Smith: The reality is that not much has changed. Good games still sell no matter who makes them. The biggest changes since 1988 are in team size, length of development, and cost.

OPM: What went wrong at Core? Obviously, there was some drama during the development of the latest *Tomb Raider*, but was that only part of a larger issue?
JHS: It was possibly one *Tomb Raider* too many. I think that a natural end had come in terms of developing more games for the franchise. Plus, as everyone knows, we experienced slippage issues that Eidos was clearly not happy about, and we couldn't blame them for it. Taking that into account, and the fact that we delivered four games in as many years, it was time for a rest. We are all very happy to be working on two original products without having the pressure of Lara.

I definitely don't think that the franchise is dead. If that were true, it would be such a waste of all the years we spent growing her. *Angel of Darkness* could've been a better game if we'd had more time. There isn't a developer in the world that wouldn't say that, but the fact of the matter is we didn't [have enough time]—unfortunately, commercial reality had to come into play.

OPM: How do you feel about Crystal Dynamics taking over the franchise?
JHS: I've known Crystal from the day it formed and was instrumental in the negotiations when Eidos bought the company. If it had to be anyone, I would rather it be a company I like and respect.

OPM: How are you applying the lessons you learned at Core to the new company?
JHS: We will not be chasing technology. One of the key reasons for the slippage on *Tomb Raider* is the fact that we were still developing our engine right up to the end, which meant gameplay was having to be continually changed to fit the technology. We will be concentrating on gameplay rather than technology, which is how games should be made.

> **"We are happy to be working on two original projects without having the pressure of Lara Croft."**

OPM: Has a lot of pressure been lifted now that you're basically able to work on the types of games you want?
JHS: We are enjoying our lives again, which, I have to say, for a number of years we haven't. The pressure to get a game out year after year is huge.

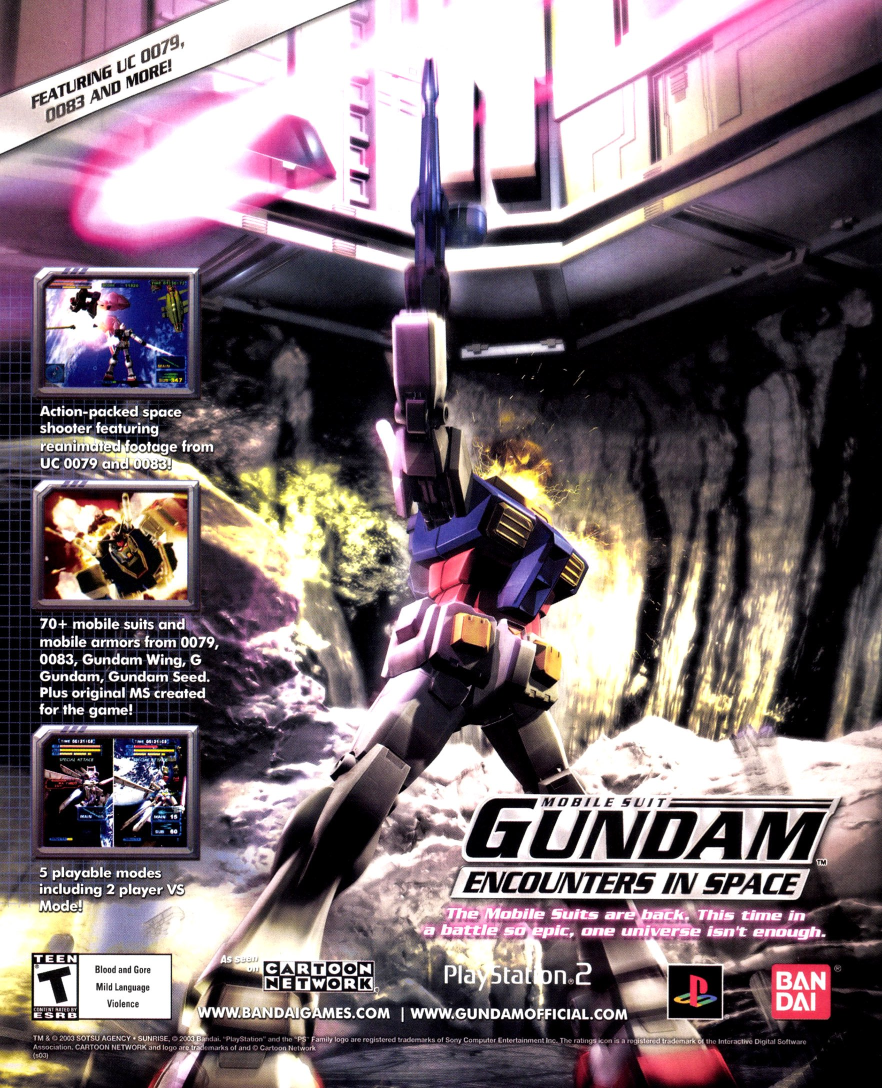
OPM: What kinds of games is Circle Studio interested in creating?
JHS: We will definitely be aiming at the mainstream, and it should come as no surprise that both games will be played from a third-person perspective. The only other thing I can tell you at the moment is there will not be a female lead in either of them.

THE 16-YEAR CORE DESIGN LEGACY

It wasn't always about Lara. Smith and his brother formed Core Design back in the late '80s, and Sega published their first game, a conversion of the arcade shooter *Action Fighter*, in 1988 for the Sega Master System, Atari ST, Amiga, and the PC. You won't remember many of their 37 games (including various iterations of the different *Tomb Raiders*), but several were significant for breaking new technological ground. Remember the stylish platform game *Chuck Rock*? How about *Rick Dangerous*, the *Indiana Jones*–inspired platform game from 1989 that paved the way for *Tomb Raider*? *Corporation*, the 1991 first-person shooter for the Genesis, was a precursor to *Wolfenstein 3D*. And the next *Guerrilla* game takes its name, *Shellshock*, from Core's stylish "urban" tank game.

While a number of the games were less than stellar in terms of quality, many were at the very least daring in their themes or gameplay mechanics, a trend sadly lacking in many of today's development studios. Let's hope Circle Studios continues this trend of innovation.

For a full history of Core, go to www.core-design.com.



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5 playable modes including 2 player VS Mode!

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ENCOUNTERS IN SPACE

The Mobile Suits are back. This time in a battle so epic, one universe isn't enough.

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Mild Language
Violence

As seen on CARTOON NETWORK

PlayStation®2

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(s03)

THEY BRING GOOD THINGS TO LIGHT
GE's 1928 Scanning Disk TV set was the first television to be sold in the United States.

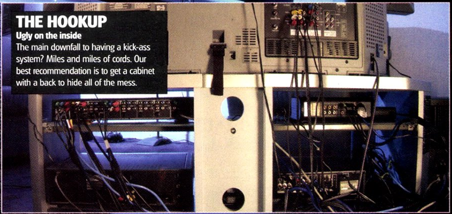
the game pad

by Darren Gladstone

Behind the Scenes

For the past few months, I've spoon-fed you the basics—but no longer! It's time to stop boring the hell out of you and start getting practical. To get our hands dirty, let's kick this off with a home project.

Today, we're breaking into *OPM*'s home-theater room, where all the magic (and game demos) happens. You'll see why we chose each product and how much it'll set you back. More important, though, is that you'll finally understand how to put all the pieces together and get the damn thing working right. Yep, chuck all those manuals written in Swahili for engineering students. I'm here for you, kids. Speaking of which, lots of people have been writing in with some great questions, and I'm doing my damnedest to answer all of them (which is not easy, between all the *Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando* I've been playing lately in HD). Please, keep asking! Upcoming columns and projects will be based on what *you* want to know.



THE HOOKUP
Ugly on the inside
The main downfall to having a kick-ass system? Miles and miles of cords. Our best recommendation is to get a cabinet with a back to hide all of the mess.

ANOTHER KIND OF CABLE

Cable also happens to be the son of Cyclops and Jean Grey. Say what? It'd take too long to explain, but trust us.

The whole point of this mess is that you want to get all your crap (games, DVDs, whatever) from the components to the television and surround sound as quickly and painlessly as possible. In a perfect world, you'd plug 'em all into the back of the television, but we're never that lucky. Too many gadgets, not enough room. While you may need to add different components, the concept here remains the same. We set everything up with the intention of having to get off our lazy asses as little as possible.

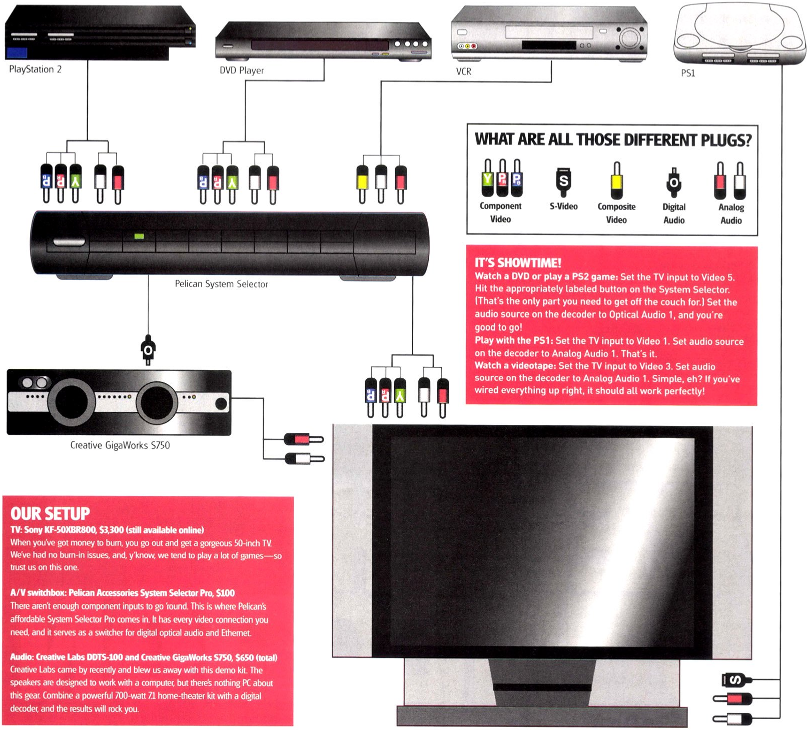
GETTIN' IT DONE

DVD, PS2, and "other" (*ahem*) console This is why you need the Pelican switchbox: There are too many components trying to share too few component-video inputs. We plugged all the devices that floss a high-end, component-video signal into the Pelican. Then we ran the component-video outputs leading from the switcher into the back of the TV, **Video Input 5**. "What about the audio?" you ask. All your audio cabling goes into the System Selector as well. Analog stereo wires from the switchbox go into the TV, along with the other wiring at **Video Input 5**. Meanwhile, an optical cable leads from the Pelican to the Creative Labs decoder at **Optical Input 1**.

PROBLEMS!!!

PS1 The Pelican System Selector is a straight-up switchbox. That's great if you have a bunch of devices all using the same video signal—but it becomes a major pain in the butt if, as in this case, you've got one device using S-Video (PS1) and another (VCR) going composite. To keep it simple, we decided to go back to the remaining inputs available on the TV. We hooked up the PS1 via S-Video and analog stereo audio into **Video Input 1** on the back of the TV. In order to get surround sound out of this, look for a pair of stereo-audio output jacks on the back of the TV. Get some RCA cables and plug them from there into the audio decoder, **Analog Audio 1**.

VCR Considering the high-definition world we're living in now, VCRs are fairly low maintenance (and low quality). Just look for any open composite-video slot, in our case **Video Input 3**, and plug that sucker in. Since we just took care of the audio from the TV for PS1, you're done!



IT'S SHOWTIME!

Watch a DVD or play a PS2 game: Set the TV input to Video 5. Hit the appropriately labeled button on the System Selector. (That's the only part you need to get off the couch for.) Set the audio source on the decoder to Optical Audio 1, and you're good to go!

Play with the PS1: Set the TV input to Video 1. Set audio source on the decoder to Analog Audio 1. That's it.

Watch a videotape: Set the TV input to Video 3. Set audio source on the decoder to Analog Audio 1. Simple, eh? If you've wired everything up right, it should all work perfectly!

OUR SETUP

TV: Sony KF-50XBR800, $3,300 (still available online)

When you've got money to burn, you go out and get a gorgeous 50-inch TV. We've had no burn-in issues, and, y'know, we tend to play a lot of games—so trust us on this one.

A/V switchbox: Pelican Accessories System Selector Pro, $100

There aren't enough component inputs to go 'round. This is where Pelican's affordable System Selector Pro comes in. It has every video connection you need, and it serves as a switcher for digital optical audio and Ethernet.

Audio: Creative Labs DDTS-100 and Creative GigaWorks S750, $650 (total)

Creative Labs came by recently and blew us away with this demo kit. The speakers are designed to work with a computer, but there's nothing PC about this gear. Combine a powerful 700-watt 7.1 home-theater kit with a digital decoder, and the results will rock you.

WHOOPS
Jean Reno turned down the role of Agent Smith in *The Matrix* to do *Godzilla*.

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

Talking Onimusha 3 with Gallic sensation Jean Reno

As popular films *La Femme Nikita* and *Léon* (*The Professional*) demonstrate, legendary actor Jean Reno has a knack for drama. Consider it the reason Capcom cast the esteemed thespian as time-traveling warrior Jacques Blanc in *Onimusha 3*. We conned the veteran performer into spilling the beans on newfound co-star Samanosuke. *–Scott Steinberg*

OPM: Is this your first time actively participating in a videogame?
Jean Reno: Yes, this is the first time I've ever participated in one.

OPM: What were your impressions of the experience?
JR: It was very satisfying. The voice recording and stage directions were clearly explained. Everything went smoothly.

OPM: Compared to making a movie, what was the most difficult part of making a PlayStation 2 title?
JR: The most difficult part was getting used to the motion-capture suit. The costume was so tight that until I saw myself on the screen, I felt naked. Until I understood what was happening, I felt like a fish out of water.

OPM: How did you feel when you were asked to appear in *Onimusha 3*?
JR: At first I was very surprised. I thought, why me? Then I thought it would be a wonderful new experience.

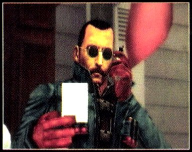
OPM: What were your thoughts when you first saw footage of the game?
JR: When I understood my character's setting, I was impressed. In addition, I was also impressed with [Samanosuke's] appearance, the poetic and historic expression.

OPM: Did you think as highly of your own CG doppelganger?
JR: I was surprised by how much it resembled me. It's strange to see yourself as a videogame character, let alone play a character that is so unlike you.

OPM: Does your appearance here connote any affinity for Japanese culture?
JR: Because of *Onimusha 3*, I was able to get further acquainted with Japanese culture. I've been in a Japanese kendo (the Japanese art of fencing) movie before. Therefore, I have had first-hand experience with the spirituality and mystic ceremonies of kendo. On a side note, I also enjoy watching sumo wrestling.

OPM: Why sumo wrestling? Love watching sweaty men grapple?
JR: Because they can settle a battle in just 10 to 15 seconds. There's also a lot of preparation involved when you want become one. It's not a sport targeted to fight against a particular opponent or to physically hurt someone. It's a sport of personal challenge.

OPM: Any last words for fans?
JR: Once you get your hands on *Onimusha 3*, you'll start a journey into the past and present. You'll travel to modern-day France and ancient Japan. There will be demon warriors and samurai waiting. You'll be the warrior, and I'll be there with you.



PICTURE PERFECT

Capcom gets Jean Reno's image down pat
For *Onimusha 3: Demon Siege*, Capcom modeled the modern-day French soldier Jacques directly after Jean Reno. Reno even took the time to provide French voiceovers for the game. However, if you wanna hear his character speak English, well, you're gonna have to hope for a good soundalike.

Photo from Corbis/Outline

Death from Above

Rain destruction on your foes from the back of a flying, fire-breathing dragon.
Dogfight airborne enemies in 360 degrees within massive environments.

CAMEO
Big Dog from *Two Stupid Dogs* had a guest appearance in the first episode of *Samurai Jack*.

YOU DON'T KNOW JACK

Samurai Jack comes to PS2, courtesy of Sega

You wouldn't think that the man behind *Dexter's Laboratory* is also a key part of the *Powerpuff Girls* cartoon (perhaps the best superhero show on television) and the mastermind behind *Samurai Jack*. In case you haven't seen the Cartoon Network show, *Samurai Jack* is about, well, a samurai named Jack who is flung into the future while battling a malevolent sorcerer named Aku. Aku has conquered most of the known galaxy in the future, so Jack goes on a quest to find a time portal in order to return to 17th-century Japan and defeat Aku before he controls the entire world.

Just as easily as Genndy Tartakovsky made the transition from nerd comedy to samurai action, *Samurai Jack* has turned from a Cartoon Network staple into a PS2 game. Most TV-to-game adaptations have the odds stacked against them, but *Samurai Jack* is a property that can easily make the show-to-game transition, and here's why:

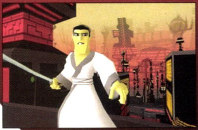
It's got the right people involved. There's input from both Tartakovsky and Dan Krall, the art director for the cartoon. Krall worked on the look of the background areas for the game, while Tartakovsky crafted the story, making sure the game's plot is part of the *Samurai Jack* canon.

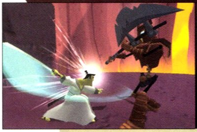
The episodic nature of the show lends itself naturally to gaming. Tartakovsky wanted to make a show where each episode revolves around a single simple idea. Since the show has the overall "Jack journeys across the Earth to go home" plot, individual episodes have gone all over the place in terms of content. Some are pure action bits (like Jack dueling a ninja), while others are more experimental (one episode centers on urban legends told about Jack and Aku). Each episode is pretty much already structured like a typical game level, featuring a simple objective, some platforming and fighting, lots of enemies, and a boss every once in a while.

It also happens to be the most violent and action-packed show on television. Tartakovsky's vision was to deliver the purest, best-looking action in cartoons, and, well, he just might have the most action on television right now. Several episodes of *Samurai Jack* have sparse dialogue and spend most of their 15 minutes showcasing beautiful fight scenes. Tartakovsky admits that one of the show outlines simply reads, "After Jack builds weapons, 20 minutes of fighting." One episode had 99 panels of nothing but arrows flying through the air.

Samurai Jack can get away with all of this hacking and slashing because he usually fights robots, and as *Samurai Jack* cartoon artist Paul Rudish comments, "The robot lobby is pretty quiet; apparently, it's OK for us to give robots the business."

Since the show is already a level-based action-adventure-platformer, we're hoping the game does it justice.





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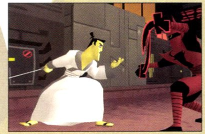
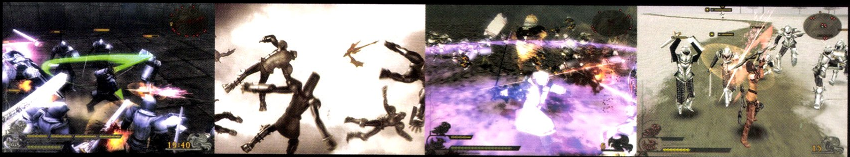


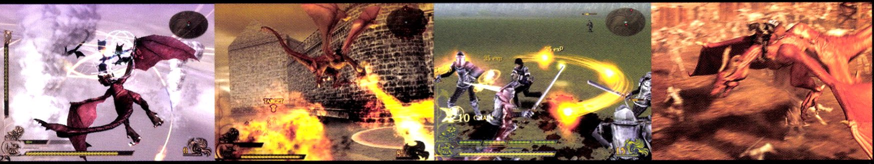
Crush vast armies with the might of your steel and magic.
As the legions fall, your strength, skills and spells will increase.



Chaos Below

Drakengard™

BRUTAL ACTION



Launch into massive battles in the air and on land.
Endless waves of enemies assail you from all sides.
Survive, and you will grow stronger. Perish, and all is lost.

MATURE 17+
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood and Gore
Violence

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PlayStation®2

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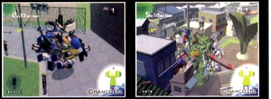
OVERHEARD "America, that looks nothing like me. Look at that! That looks like the dude from *The Planet of the Apes* or somethin', man." –Deion Sanders after being rendered by 989 Sports for the pregame show

Dear Friends
music from
FINAL FANTASY

Fantasy Concert

Squenix will be holding the first-ever *Final Fantasy* concert in L.A. during the week of E3. The L.A. Philharmonic and the Master Chorale will be using their talents to perform music from the series.

ONLY IN JAPAN



KATAMARI DAMASHII

"Because it's there." That's the answer given by George Mallory when asked why he wanted to climb Mt. Everest. It could also be the answer to the riddle of why *Katamari Damashii* uses both the left *and* right analog sticks for movement (didn't *Super Mario 64* establish that you only need ONE?).

Of course, that's not the only thing that's a little odd about Namco's latest game. Let's start with the plot. The king of some faraway planet got really drunk one day and decided to destroy the stars. As his son, you have been tasked with coming to Earth and cleaning up his mess...in more ways than one. See, in order to return the stars to the sky, you've got to pick up the trash. When you roll a mystical magical orb around litter-strewn areas, the trash sticks to the ball and makes it bigger (a snowball effect without the snow). However, hitting obstacles knocks items off the ball, making it smaller.

Now, this is where the puzzle element comes in: The bigger the ball, the bigger the items that can be rolled up into the ball. I'm not just referring to trash anymore—as the ball gets bigger, you can scoop up park benches, lampposts, pets, even cars and houses. Oh, and people. People who, when you add them to the ball, scream in that over-the-top-yet-totally-satisfying horror-movie way. Once you've assembled a ball of the correct size, it'll fly up into the sky and become a star. Of course, that's not as easy as it sounds (that's where the awkward control system comes into play), but it all works in a fun—if criminally insane—fashion. It's addictive and littered with great touches, from the ball morphing out of shape when odd items are added to it to the general Lego-ness of everything. Incidentally, should you ever wish to purchase this game in Japan (which, sadly, is the only place you'll be able to buy it), don't bother looking in the puzzle section. You might want to try "romantic action" instead...because that's what Namco's calling it. Go figure.

NAMCO'S OIJ HISTORY

Namco is no stranger to Japan-only titles. Witness:

Taiko no Tatsujin (*OPM* 64): A phenomenally successful and incredibly crazy music game based on a traditional Japanese instrument. Blame this game for Nintendo's *Donkey Konga*.

Yumeria (*OPM* 70): An "action-shooter" with interludes where you influence conversations between teenage girls with your hand. No, we're not kidding. No, it's not porn. Yes, it's damn close.

SUPER BOWL BASH

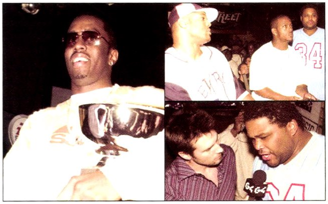
We pit actual Super Bowl events against 989 Sports' Game Before the Game and OPM editor Giancarlo Varanini's Super Bowl party

	Super Bowl	989 Game Before the Game	Giancarlo's Party
1st Quarter	Looks like it'll be a defensive struggle, the score resembles that of a baseball game. **Patriots — 0, Panthers — 0**	Antowain Smith of the Patriots scores on a run up the middle, but the Panthers answer with a touchdown run by Stephen Davis. **Patriots — 7, Panthers — 7**	Giancarlo takes a brisk walk over to the food area where he jukes the carrots and heads straight for the nachos. **Giancarlo — 1, Nachos — 0**
2nd Quarter	The Patriots strike first with a 5-yard pass, but Carolina answers back with a 39-yard touchdown pass. The Patriots score again, and the Panthers counter with a field goal. **Patriots — 14, Panthers — 10**	The Patriots make a costly fumble at the Panther's 5-yard line. Carolina recovers and drives down the field for a touchdown. **Patriots — 7, Panthers — 14**	Giancarlo wakes up from a nap and realizes there's finally a game going on and that someone's trying to steal his stereo! **Giancarlo — 0** **Dirty Thieves — 1**
3rd Quarter	Almost as boring as the first quarter—both teams realize they should start playing some defense again. **Patriots — 14, Panthers — 10**	The Panthers go on a scoring spree and make a successful two-point conversion. The Patriots follow up with another touchdown, but Carolina quickly answers back. **Patriots — 14, Panthers — 29**	The Super Bowl halftime show leaves everyone in a state of shock due to Janet Jackson's "costume malfunction." **Giancarlo — ?** **Janet Jackson — 1,000**
4th Quarter	It's an exciting conclusion to the Super Bowl as the Patriots drive within field goal range in the closing seconds and win the game. **Patriots — 32, Panthers — 29**	The Patriots make a strong comeback, coming within eight points of Carolina, but the Panthers recover a Patriots onside kick and run out the clock. **Patriots — 21, Panthers — 29**	There's a brief chicken wing emergency, but the number of people passed out on the ground overshadows it. **We're all winners!**

MADDEN BOWL SACKS HOUSTON

EA Sports kicks off the festivities with a celebrity tournament

Recording artists, actors, and P. Diddy made Houston infinitely cooler than usual for a few days around the Super Bowl as they arrived to take part in the 10th annual Madden Bowl. The event pits celebrities and professional football players against one another in a tournament to determine the Madden NFL champion of the universe. Dwight Freeney of the Indianapolis Colts managed to beat out Willis McGahee of the Buffalo Bills to win that title. The event also celebrated the launch of *NFL Street*, giving attendees a chance to try out the game on kiosks located in the Roxy Night Club.



A sporran is the hairy bag that Scotsmen wear over their kilts. The number of tassels on it is rumored to be linked to the individual's "manliness," but we can't confirm that.

Clish MacLaver's

GOSSIP GOSSIP

All the muck that's fit to rake

Not that I'm one to toot my own horn darlings, but I really nailed it last month, eh? *Jak III*? Check. We should have screens next issue. *Ratchet & Clank III*? Check. We should have stuff next month on that too. *The Getaway 2*? Check. We've got that this month. *Sly 2*? Check. It's on the cover. Guerrilla's Vietnam game? Check. See Previews. Who should you trust? Me, baby. *Me*. Now let's see what kind of stuff we can stir up this month....

MONTHLY PS3 UPDATE

There's very little to report this month, save for further indications that the system will go on sale in 2006. In the meantime, we can expect some signs of life throughout March, starting with Sony possibly showing something at the Game Developer's Conference in San Jose, CA. Keep an eye on www.1UP.com for news on that front.

PS2 PRICE DROP?

If the PS2's price doesn't drop to $149 or less by the time you read this, I'll eat my sporran. Don't know what a sporran is? Then look it up, darlings.

Let's hope that those ridiculously overpriced color-coded systems get cheaper too. $314 strikes me as remarkably overpriced for a spray-painted PlayStation 2.

HOW ABOUT A PStwo?

Possibly coinciding with the above is a compact version of the PS2, much like the cute little PS1 that we've come to love so much. I think we may see this unveiled at E3 in May, possibly with a Network Adaptor built in.

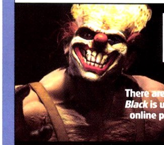
PANDORA, THE DAY AFTER TOMORROW?

Pandora Tomorrow is delayed on PS2 because of an obstructive "exclusive" Xbox deal. But what does that mean for the future? Back when the first game had just been released, the game that turned out to be *Pandora Tomorrow* was described by Ubi insiders as a kind of *Splinter Cell 1.5* with an emphasis on online modes. Back then, there were indications that a true sequel was also in the works. Whatever happened to that game? And how does the recent delay affect it? Hopefully, I'll have some news for you next issue.

HIKE!

MADDEN COMING TO PSP?
It just wouldn't be a PlayStation launch without a new version of *Madden,* would it? There are strong rumors indicating that *Madden NFL 2005* will be one of the first games on Sony's handheld.

BLACK



ANOTHER TWISTED METAL?
There are rumors that a follow-up to *Twisted Metal: Black* is under development at Incog right now, with online play looking to be the dominant feature. We could have confirmation next month.

KRI

MARK OF KRI GETS A SEQUEL
There's a good chance you'll see some first screens of *Mark of Kri 2* in the next issue of *OPM*, but for the time being, it's a "secret" project. Expect an experience similar to last time, only more of it. Just like *Sly 2.*

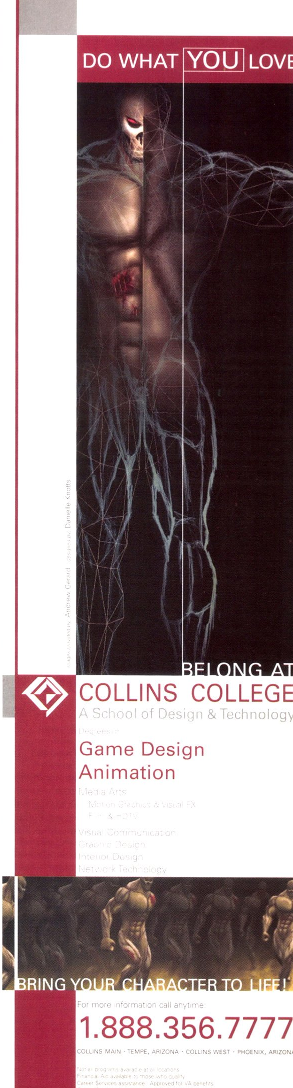
SPEED

MONTHLY NEED FOR SPEED RUMOR
The new rumor is that the next *NFS* title is a totally new experience and not a sequel to *Underground,* as previously thought. Current rumblings indicate that it could be "exotics versus tuners." Cool!

E-MAIL ME!

Got some good gaming gossip? If you hear anything juicy or get your hands on some cool screens or pictures, send me an e-mail at the following address: clish_maclaver@ziffdavis.com

Illustration by Greg White



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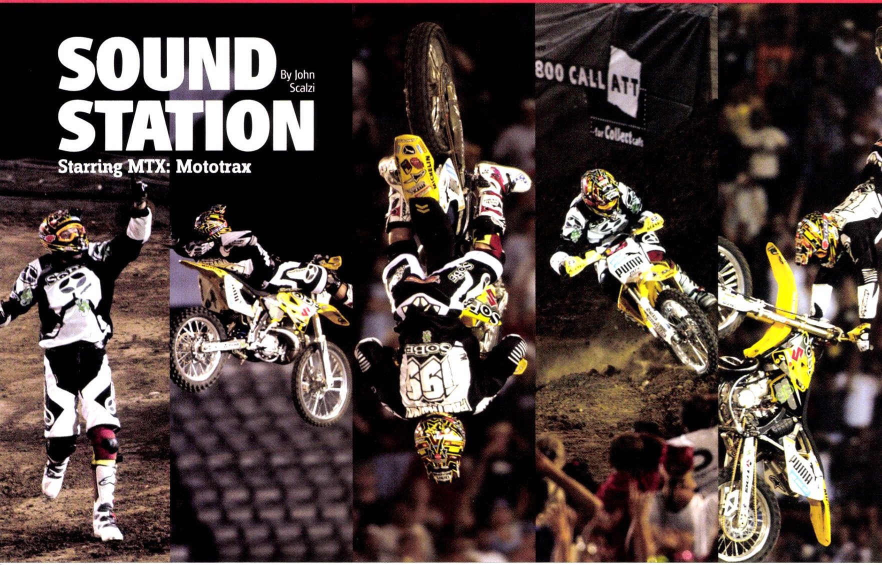
NAUGHTY PUNK!
When Bobby Steele left the Misfits, Glenn Danzig quickly staked copyright claims to all Misfits songs—even those written by Steele!

SOUND STATION

By John Scalzi

Starring MTX: Mototrax


Photos by Getty Images

DESCENDENTS: *EVERYTHING SUCKS*

You know, for a punk-rock album called *Everything Sucks*, there's a lot of at least superficially optimistic stuff here—stuff about being in love and how life is better when you're together with someone special and all that happy crap that made the Descendents one of the original pop-punk outfits. Heck, there's even a love song about coffee. Now, to balance things out, there are plenty of your usual punk 'tude songs as well (including, but not limited to, the title track), but in the end, you have to conclude that, overall, life does *not* suck for the Descendents and that the album's title is mostly just a pose and a sham. But at least it's a pose and a sham with some slammin' thump and crunch, so if they're hypocrites, they're hypocrites who rock. I can live with that.

★★★½

FAITH NO MORE: *KING FOR A DAY, FOOL FOR A LIFETIME*

One of the reasons Faith No More was as successful as they were was because lead singer Mike Patton was aggressively, obsessively weird—you honestly didn't know where the hell he was going next. But as with many things, there's such a thing as too much aggressive weirdness, and *King* tramples past that barrier like an enraged elephant. It's hard to pinpoint the moment it goes bad—it could be when Patton coos in Portuguese on "Caralho Voador" or when he sounds as if he's choking on a dog biscuit on "Ugly in the Morning"—but there's no doubt that by the time you're finished listening to *King*, bad is where you are. If you're looking for a new fix of Faith No More, I suggest you pick up *Angel Dust* instead—it's just as weird, but in a good way.

★★

METALLICA: *KILL 'EM ALL*

You know, when Metallica fans heard rumors that *St. Anger* was going to be like the old stuff, they didn't think "like the old stuff" meant "James Hetfield manfully trying not to cry in his therapy sessions." They thought it meant *St. Anger* would be like *Kill 'Em All*, which is a friggin' blueprint on how to be loud, fast, and aggressive. They thought it meant the album would include songs like "Whiplash" and "Metal Militia," which are revved up so fast that if you actually tried to headbang at riff speed, your skull would snap off at the jawline and make it to Saturn ahead of the Cassini mission. They thought it meant it would feature songs so good they hurt, not hurting made into songs that aren't so good. So suck it up, Metallica. Kill 'em all again, why don't you.

★★★★★

THE MISFITS: *WALK AMONG US*

Glenn Danzig was *so* cute as a punk, jamming his gothy little devilish self around the stage and delivering blistering two-minute-and-under songs on the subjects of astro zombies ("Astro Zombies"), being turned into a Martian ("I Turned Into a Martian"), and why oh *why* can't he eat anything besides brains (the uproarious 56-second singalong "Braineaters"). There, there, Glenn. We *all* feel your pain. I'm having a fine time with *Walk Among Us*—it's hard to take it too seriously, but then again, why should anyone have to take it seriously? I've never taken Glenn Danzig seriously *before*, and I see no reason to start now. But I can say *Walk* is better, or at least more amusing, than any six Danzig albums you might know. More brains, Glenn?

★★★½

SLIPKNOT: *SLIPKNOT*

Mmmmmmmm... tasty. This album is just *ridiculously* loud, which probably has something to do with the band's three-man drum section whacking away like it's trying to pummel a hole to the very center of the Earth. But more to the point, the album just doesn't *stop*—it's like singer Corey Taylor has had his lungs replaced by some sort of cybernetic apparatus that allows him to ceaselessly exhale, all the better to bellow and growl. It's frankly excessive in its relentlessness. On the other hand, if one is relentless, how can one *not* be excessive? Sorry, I'm not actually trying to be deep here. I'm just saying: Loud. Big. Obnoxious. Fun. Overall, it's a fine entry in the dress-up metal genre (see: Gwar, Mushroomhead, Insane Clown Posse).

★★★★

TRICK OFF THIS.

NOT YOUR ORDINARY GAME

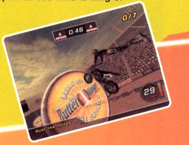
EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

MTX: MOTOTRAX

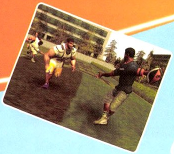
PS2

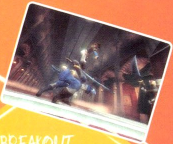
Think you've got what it takes? MTX: Mototrax offers the fastest motocross gaming experience that will have you accelerating around corners and flying through the air at teeth-rattling speeds. Launch into a gravity-defying inverted 360 before crossing the finish line to the roar of the crowd. Earn cold hard cash from contest wins and sponsorships. Use the money to modify your rider's attributes, purchase equipment upgrades or buy access to freeride environments complete with new goals and objectives. You can upgrade your power as you progress and ride 125cc and 250cc 2 stroke bikes as well as 250cc and 450cc 4 stroke bikes from manufacturers like Suzuki and Yamaha.

The game features Travis Pastrana—legendary motocross, supercross and freestyle athlete—plus 12 other top pro riders, or you can take your skills online to compete against your friends or other live players to see who is king of the track!



BREAK OUT OF THE ORDINARY
Nestlé
Butterfinger
bar





SWEET CODES

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

NFL STREET

PS2

Unlimited Turbo:
Press Start to pause game play, then hold L1 and press Circle, X, Right, Left (2), Up.

Unlockable Teams:

NFL Legends: Go to the NFL Challenge and complete the initial ladder.

X-ecutioners: Go to the NFL Challenge and complete the fourth ladder.

AFC West All-Stars: Go to NFL Challenge mode and complete the AFC West.

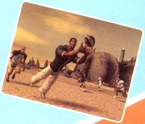
AFC East All-Stars: Go to NFL Challenge mode and complete the AFC East.

AFC North All-Stars: Go to NFL Challenge mode and complete the AFC North.

AFC South All-Stars: Go to NFL Challenge mode and complete the AFC South.

NFC West All-Stars: Go to NFL Challenge mode and complete the NFC West.

NFC East All-Stars: Go to NFL Challenge mode and complete the NFC East.



BREAKOUT TRICKS

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME PS2

Slo-Mo Jump
- In a fight, all the enemies lose their blocks if you use a slo-mo. The ones that wouldn't allow you to jump over them now do.

Continuous Swing
- When swinging from pole to pole, keep the R1 button pressed down; this allows the Prince to continuously swing and link to the next pole.

Secret Passages
- It is necessary to closely observe the walls that do not seem solid. They are probably walls that can be broken and lead to the secret passages.

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ROCK YOUR SOCKS OFF
Tenacious D: The Complete Masterworks features an entire concert and all the HBO Tenacious D shorts.

DVD REVIEWS

By John Scalzi

KORG TRITON

SCHOOL OF ROCK

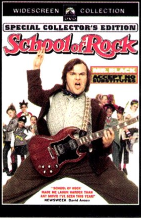
(Jack Black, Joan Cusack)

I love Jack Black for two main reasons: 1) Tenacious D rocks, and 2) Jack Black is one of the few flabby guys in Hollywood who hasn't been pigeonholed as a generic fat loser. Instead, he's the guy who *could* be a loser, but manages to avoid it through his native smarts and core of decency.

He's just like *School of Rock*'s Dewey Finn. Dewey has "insipid loser" stamped on his forehead. He's been kicked out of his band and snakes his roommate's substitute teacher job at a snooty private school to pay the rent. Then he comes up with a scheme to trick the kids into becoming his new band to win a contest. Somewhere along the way, though, things change. Dewey doesn't change so much as he lets the nonloser side of himself come through. By making the kids members of his band, he makes them equals in his quest—which makes him care about them and makes them trust him.

It would be awful if anyone but Black were starring; he sells the Afterschool Special–style plot with his guileless enthusiasm for what he's doing. Credit also goes to director Richard Linklater and screenwriter Mike White. They have the smarts to make Dewey's nominal nemesis (Joan Cusack as the school's uptight headmistress) a sympathetic and likeable character, and not to make the kids in the film sitcom smartasses. It's a film that's better, funnier, and smarter than you could have hoped for—which makes it like Jack Black. It's, like, *awesome*.

★★★★½


WIDESCREEN COLLECTION
DVD
SPECIAL COLLECTOR'S EDITION
School of Rock
MR. BLACK
ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES
"SCHOOL OF ROCK MADE ME LAUGH HARDER THAN ANY MOVIE I'VE SEEN THIS YEAR"
NEWSWEEK, David Ansen

UPCOMING DVD RELEASES

March 2, 2004
James and the Giant Peach SE
Looney Tunes: Back in Action
School of Rock
Starsky & Hutch: Season 1
Take This Job and Shove It

March 9, 2004
Brother Sun, Sister Moon
Futurama: Vol. 3
Mona Lisa Smile
Schindler's List

March 16, 2004
21 Grams
Cheaper by the Dozen (1950)
The Commitments
The Dead Zone: Season 2
The Dream Catcher
Married...With Children: Season 2

March 23, 2004
Fresh Horses
Honey
Shattered Glass

March 30, 2004
Brother Bear
House of Sand and Fog
Sanford and Son: Season 4
Something's Gotta Give
The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (2003)

BROTHER BEAR

(Joaquin Phoenix, Rick Moranis)

Disney has rather inexplicably come to the conclusion that people don't like 2D animation (hello? Disney? Ever watch your own friggin' cable network?), so this is likely to be the last large-scale "traditional" animated film from the studio for a long time. This is bad, but at least this era of Disney doesn't end too badly: *Brother Bear* is beautiful to look at and has a decent coming-of-age story with an oops-I've-been-turned-into-a-bear twist providing the teachable moment. The story needs more oomph, but that's been the case with most traditional animation efforts from Disney recently—which should be a hint to Disney, but apparently it's not. On the other hand, whoever thought to reincarnate Bob and Doug McKenzie as moose deserves a raise.

★★★½

11% The rating of *The Cat in The Hat* on RottenTomatoes.com

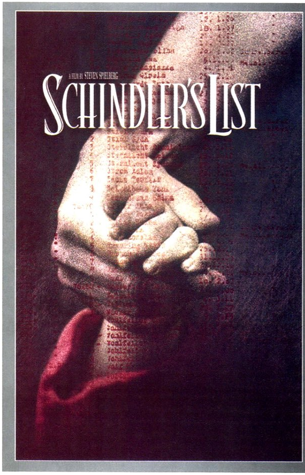
97% The rating of *Schindler's List* on RottenTomatoes.com

DR. SEUSS' THE CAT IN THE HAT

(Mike Myers, Alec Baldwin)

Given the generally feculent nature of the live-action *Grinch* adaptation, I didn't exactly have high hopes for *The Cat in the Hat*. Having said that, I'm frankly agog at how terrifyingly bad this flick is. Blame is thick on the ground here, but a heaping portion must go to Myers, who as the Cat fumbles about like Charles Nelson Reilly headlining a furry convention. It's more than uncomfortable, it's well nigh unseemly. I have a kid who loves Dr. Seuss, but you couldn't pay me enough to play this crapfest for her. I want her to actually go on *liking* Dr. Seuss books, you see. Anyway, pray they don't decide to make a movie out of *The Lorax*; if they do, we may have to set fire to L.A. as a preventative measure. Don't say I didn't warn you.

½


A FILM BY STEVEN SPIELBERG
SCHINDLER'S LIST

SCHINDLER'S LIST

(Liam Neeson, Ralph Fiennes)

Spielberg's masterpiece finally comes to DVD, and it's still a staggering piece of filmmaking. Without his trademark sentimentality (except at the end, by which time it is amply earned), Spielberg documents the terrible dehumanization of the Jews by the Nazis and shows how one man becomes a force for good almost against his intentions. That's Oskar Schindler (Neeson), who first merely intends to exploit cheap Jewish labor but ends up saving over 1,000 Jews from certain death. His actions are darkly mirrored by those of a Nazi commandant (Fiennes), who represents the other side of the coin; one of the film's most chilling scenes has Fiennes' character struggling to dispense mercy and failing. Not an easy film, but the story and the skill of its telling will sweep you in and give you some feeling for this terrible chapter of history. This is Spielberg's best film, one of the best films of the 1990s, and an essential for any DVD library.

★★★★★

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

(Brendan Fraser, Steve Martin)

There's a reason all Looney Tunes cartoons are six to seven minutes long: That's how long they *should* be. There's only so long you can keep anarchy aloft before it falls like the proverbial anvil. By this measurement, *Back in Action* is about 15 times longer than it should be. Still, it's a valiant effort. Director Joe Dante, who came close to making live-action *Looney Tunes* movies with the *Gremlins* flicks, throws everything at the wall to see what sticks, and you've gotta respect that. And it's nice to see Bugs, Daffy, and other classic characters doing something new, even if it requires spending screen time with Brendan Fraser. But we don't need a *Looney Tunes* movie. What we need is a bunch of new six- to seven-minute *Looney Tunes*.

★★★

THE RUNDOWN

(The Rock, Christopher Walken)

WWE doesn't do anything for me (honestly, if I want to watch a homoerotic soap opera, I'll tune in to *Queer as Folk*), but I really do like The Rock, who plays a moderately ethical "retrieval expert" (i.e., collection goon) in this action flick. The, as I like to call him, is built for the screen, and his style is looser and more relaxed than that of the previous generation of action heroes. He's fun, and so is *The Rundown*, which hits its marks competently and gets the job done without looking like it's trying too hard. It's enough fun that I'm even willing to take Seann William Scott as the goofy sidekick as part of the bargain (the film also features Rosario Dawson). And then there's Christopher Walken, doing his Walken thing. Really, all the way around, what's *not* to like here?

★★★½

THE RUNNING MAN

(Arnold Schwarzenegger, Richard Dawson)

Speaking of the previous generation of action hero, this rerelease (it comes with various "special edition" DVD goodies) whips us back to Ah-nold in his full-on mid-'80s glory, when he was hacking and slashing bad guys rather than California's budget. This is one of Arnie's middling efforts (better than *Commando*, not as good as *Predator*), but it's fun to watch for its nasty little touches, like how the peon functionaries at the *Running Man* show yearn for food when their boss isn't looking. It's also a worthwhile viewing simply for the over-the-top performance of Richard Dawson as evil *Running Man* emcee—he plays the part as if he's trying to atone for all those years of hosting *Family Feud*. And you know what? He does.

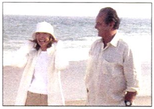
★★★

SHATTERED GLASS

(Hayden Christensen, Chloë Sevigny)

Pry Hayden Christensen from the hammy, CGI-encrusted hands of George Lucas, and you discover something interesting: The boy can act. This is evidenced in *Shattered Glass*, in which Christensen takes on Stephen Glass, an up-and-coming magazine writer who has one tiny little secret: He's making up all his stories. And naturally, the longer you do something like that, the harder it is to keep up the lie; Glass ends up dancing as fast as he can, which is not nearly fast enough. This film is based on true events (Stephen Glass exists and recently published a novel—acknowledged fiction), and it's fascinating to see how far you can get with bullshit and charm, at least until the latter is stretched too thin to cover the former.

★★★★



SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE

(Jack Nicholson, Diane Keaton)

The film that gives the *OPM* demographic what they've always wanted to see: Diane Keaton naked! What? That's *not* what you wanted to see? Well, aren't *you* the ageist one. Keaton is great as playwright Erica Barry and she's great playing her age (57) and becoming the object of affection not only of Jack Nicholson (who starts the film dating Erica's daughter) but also Keanu Reeves. And why not? Probably not everyone's cup of tea, but it's a funny, smart film that should give you hope that you can continue to be attractive—and engaged in life—long after gravity hits. We should all age as well as Keaton and Nicholson. We should all also have a house in the Hamptons, like Keaton does here. But let's not push it.

★★★★

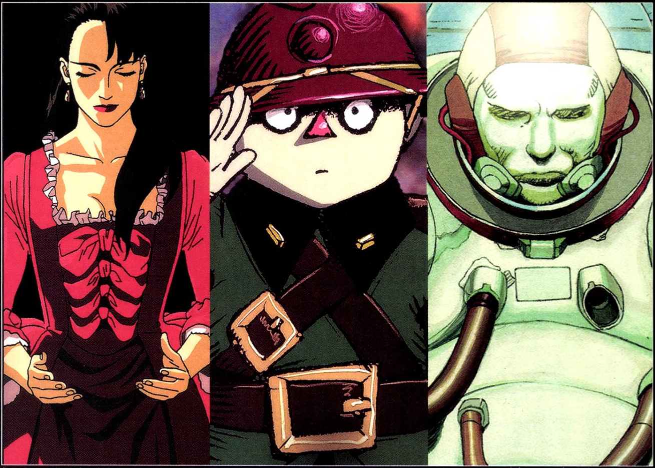
21 GRAMS

(Sean Penn, Naomi Watts)

One terrible incident (and no, I'm not going to tell you what it is) precipitates three stories, and one film whips you among all three without much regard for niceties like temporal anchoring. If you can handle not quite knowing where you are in the time stream, *21 Grams* (which is not a drug reference, by the way) boasts impressive performances from Naomi Watts, Benicio Del Toro, and Sean Penn as three people damaged in some way by life whose paths cross (literally) in that incident mentioned above. Cheerful? Oh my, no. Not at *all*. But on the other hand, Watts and Del Toro didn't get Oscar nominations for their work in this film for nothing. See it sometime when you can handle being depressed afterward. Or have a hotline number close at hand.

★★★★

TOO MUCH INFORMATION
And you thought American fans were obsessive: Takehito Koyasu's blood type is A.



ANIMANIA!

By Dave Smith

Heads that explode, heads that are televisions

IN YER MEMORIES

One of the last holdout classics of mid-'90s animation is finally coming to the United States on DVD. *Memories* should be on shelves as you read this, courtesy of the enthusiastic anime fans at Sony Pictures. Never heard of it? That's no surprise, since *Memories* has been out of print on home video for years. But the beautiful collection of three short films by Katsuhiro Otomo, Koji Morimoto (maker of "Beyond," the best *Animatrix* short), and Tensai Okamuro features some wonderfully thoughtful science fiction and a killer soundtrack. The DVD features the shorts, pilot concepts for each film, and interviews with the directors.

YOU'RE ALREADY SLASHED

Because the massive original TV series just wasn't enough, ADV Films has picked up the rights to the new-school revival of *Fist of the North Star.* The new series, which stars fangirl heartthrob Takehito Koyasu as the voice of head-exploding legend Kenshiro, is coming out on DVD this year alongside its broadcast on ADV's fledgling Anime Network. If two original video animations, a classic movie, and a massive TV series just didn't serve up enough head-exploding action, ADV has your hookup this summer.

DEAD LEAVES, DEAD EVERYTHING

If you liked the most violent bits of Gainax's *FLCL*, Production IG has something up your alley. *Dead Leaves* is 52 minutes of goofball violence done in an unconventional style, such as what you might find in *Liquid Television* or Jamie Hewlett's *Tank Girl* animation. The story follows the heavily armed Pandy and her television-headed sidekick Retro as they flee from the cops and God knows what else in a bizarro futuristic city. *Dead Leaves* is currently working its way through the festival circuit in Japan, but Manga Entertainment is coproducing the work, and an American DVD release is already planned for spring, with toy tie-ins and the possibility of a videogame spin-off. Check out the trailer at www.deadleaves.jp.

SHE, THE ULTIMATE DEPRESSION

It's a bit far off, but Viz has pegged April 27 as the release date for the first volume of *Saishu Heiki Kanojo*, or *Saikano* for short. This isn't what it appears to be at first glance—beneath the veneer of charming junior-high romance is one of the most violent and unsettling science-fiction stories in years. It focuses on a young girl forced to become her nation's ultimate cybernetic weapon. However, *Saikano* is well made and moving, so watch for other installments of the four-volume series over the rest of the year.

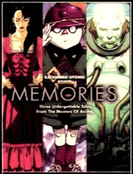
TO PLAY OR NOT TO PLAY

More and more videogame favorites are finding fertile ground in the world of animation. Mystical Ninja Goemon, Konami's much-beloved spiky-haired action-RPG hero, is starring in a TV series from ADV Films, and Studio Gonzo's *Final Fantasy Unlimited* series is coming out on almost the exact same schedule. Meanwhile, for fans of esoteric imports, Alfa System's strategy-interaction sim *Gunparade March* (little known in the States, but a massive hit in Japan) has spawned its own TV spin-off. All three series have new DVD volumes coming out in March.

HIP-HOP SAMURAI

After lying low since the massive success of *Cowboy Bebop*, director Shinichiro Watanabe is resurfacing this year with a brand-new action series. Watanabe claims that *Samurai Champloo*—featuring the character designs of Kazuto Nakazawa (*Kacho Oji* and *El Hazard*)—has been influenced by everything from modern hip-hop music to classic black-and-white samurai movies. It should be a lot more interesting than your average samurai series, and Geneon Entertainment already has an American release in the works.

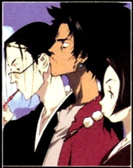
Fist of the North Star


KATSUHIRO OTOMO presents
MEMORIES
Three Unforgettable Tales From The Masters Of Anime

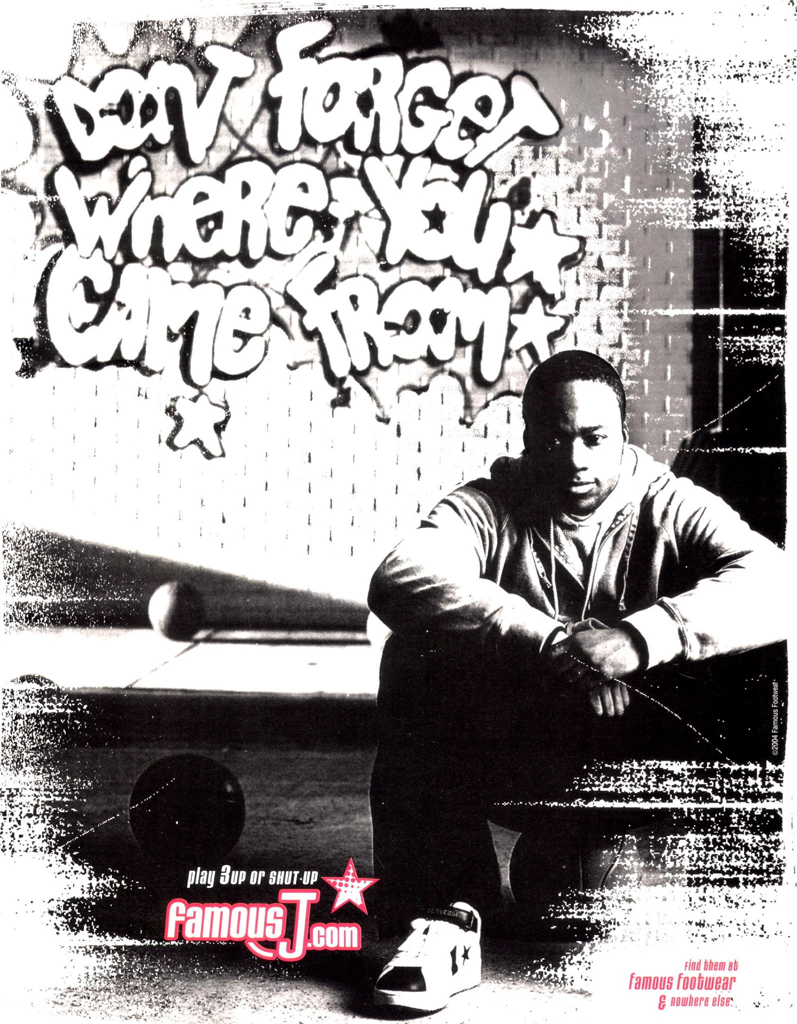
Memories

Legend of the Mystical Ninja

Saishu Heiki Kanojo



Samurai Champloo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play 3up or shut-up

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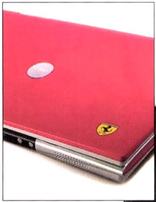
BLING (bling)
This slang was added to the 2003 *Oxford English Dictionary.* Other recent inductees include jiggy, dope, and whack.

THE LIST

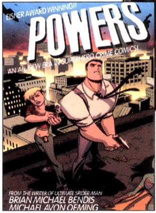
The eight coolest things we could find this month

PRANCING LAPTOP
ACER FERRARI 3000

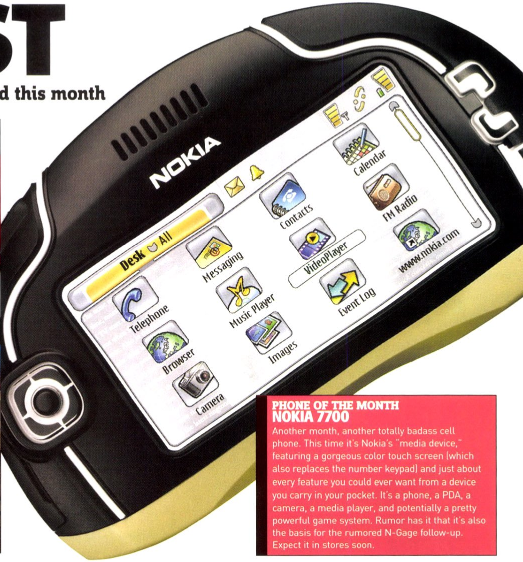


Yes, it's a laptop. It has everything you would normally want from a luggable Windows machine, like an Athlon XP-M processor, a 60GB hard drive, an ATI Mobility Radeon 9200 graphics chipset for games, and a DVD drive, but it also has something special. It's the only notebook in the world to sport the patented "Ferrari Red" color. Acer claims it "makes a clear statement about the taste and sophistication of the person who uses it." Sure it does.

COPS 'N' CAPES
POWERS


EISNER AWARD WINNING!!
POWERS
AN ALL NEW ERA IN SUPERHERO CRIME COMICS!
FROM THE WRITER OF ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN
BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS
MICHAEL AVON OEMING

Imagine if David Mamet were to write *Homicide: Life on the Street* but set it in a city filled with superheroes. Besides being an excellent police procedural, the freedom of being a non-Marvel and non-DC book lets the stories get into bolder territory—like superhero groupies and a prominent superhero caught on tape à la R. Kelly. Issue 1 of *Powers: Volume 2* comes out in March, but you can get trade paperbacks of all the previous cases to catch up.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Event Log
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PHONE OF THE MONTH
NOKIA 7700

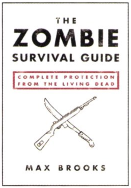
Another month, another totally badass cell phone. This time it's Nokia's "media device," featuring a gorgeous color touch screen (which also replaces the number keypad) and just about every feature you could ever want from a device you carry in your pocket. It's a phone, a PDA, a camera, a media player, and potentially a pretty powerful game system. Rumor has it that it's also the basis for the rumored N-Gage follow-up. Expect it in stores soon.

GET WITH IT
SLANG FLASHCARDS

"He'll just play you for your trig notes and dump you after the test."

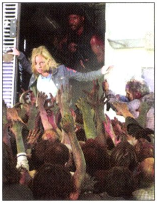
Do you find yourself wondering what "the kids" are saying these days? Do you spend hours trying to decipher the meanings of songs from 50 Cent? With this set of 60 laminated 5x7-inch flashcards, you can learn the proper use of terms like "ice" and "play" by means of classic language-learning techniques. They are, like, totally dope, dawg. See? They work. Get them at www.knockknock.biz.

ZOMBIES DROOL
THE ZOMBIE SURVIVAL GUIDE: COMPLETE PROTECTION FROM THE LIVING DEAD


THE
ZOMBIE
SURVIVAL GUIDE
COMPLETE PROTECTION FROM THE LIVING DEAD
MAX BROOKS

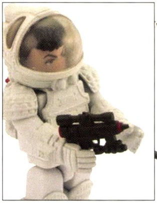
The absolute sincerity of this book makes it all the funnier. It covers everything from zombie physiology to weapons to ideal escape locations ("if zombies overrun the world, try living on an oil platform in the middle of the ocean") to historic zombie outbreaks. It's both funny and educational.

ZOMBIES RULE
DAWN OF THE DEAD



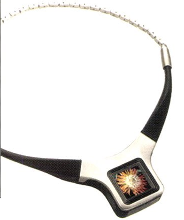
As a rule, we think it's a waste of viewers' time to remake movies that are perfectly good in their original state. But the ensemble cast of this remake of the George Romero classic, led by Sarah Polley and Ving Rhames, piques our interest—and hey, aren't even bad horror movies usually pretty good? Check it out when it opens on March 19.

CUTE BUT SCARY
ALIEN SERIES KUBRICK TOYS

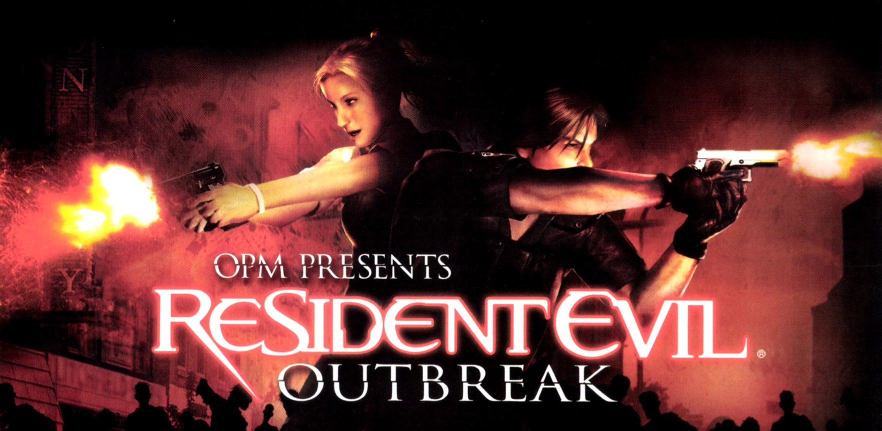


To be filed under "those wacky Japanese and their toys," these Kubricks bring all the gore of the *Alien* movies to the cute world of plastic toys. All of the major characters and scenes from the first movie are represented, including the chest-bursting scene. Aww...aren't they cute? Find them at specialist toy-import stores.

FASHION ICON
NOKIA MEDALLION



Keep your loved ones close to your heart—or your larynx, in this case. Nokia's nifty little accessory lets you zap pictures from your camera phone to the wearable 96x96-pixel display. It stores up to eight photos at a time, and it's available in steel chain or matte rubber. Bizarrely, it's also a timepiece, although we're not sure what practical use that is, given how it hangs.



OPM PRESENTS

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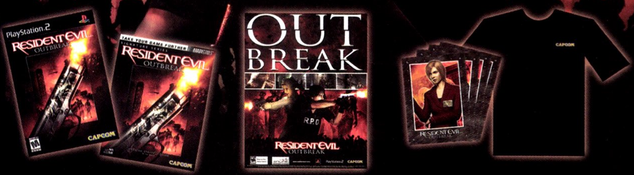

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CRIMSON TIDE

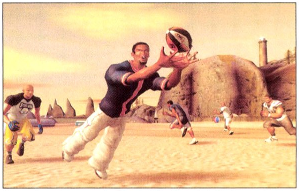
CRIMSON TIDE
This is one of the better submarine movies out there. It's no *Das Boot*, but then again, it's no *U-571*.

BY THE NUMBERS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EB GAMES electronics boutique

PS2 Top 20 Sales

Scooter is a big nerd: He finished *Baldur's Gate* in 1998 and saved his character. He imported this character into *BG2* in 2000 and into the *BG2* expansion in 2001. He held on to that saved game for three years.



Do you know how to write "football" in Scottish? You just write "fitba'"! At least, that's what Irvine Welsh did in all of his books featuring Scottish characters talking about soccer.

	Title/Publisher	Rating
1	**NFL Street** (EA Big)	★★★★½
2	**Need for Speed Underground** (EA Games)	★★★★½
3	**Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II** (Interplay)	★★★½
4	**Mafia** (Gathering)	★★★½
5	**Final Fantasy X-2** (Square Enix U.S.A.)	★★★★★
6	**SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs** (Sony CEA)	★★★★★
7	**Madden NFL 2004** (EA Sports)	★★★★★
8	**Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2** (Atari)	★★½
9	**Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time** (Ubisoft)	★★★★★
10	**Manhunt** (Rockstar)	★★★½
11	**NBA Live 2004** (EA Sports)	★★★★½
12	**True Crime: Streets of L.A.** (Activision)	★★
13	**Splinter Cell** (Ubisoft)	★★★★½
14	**GTA Combo Pack** (Rockstar)	N/A
15	**The Sims: Bustin' Out** (Maxis)	★★★★½
16	**The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King** (EA Games)	★★★★★
17	**Sonic Heroes** (Sega)	★★
18	**.hack//QUARANTINE** (Bandai)	★★★★
19	**Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando** (Sony CEA)	★★★★★
20	**Cabela's Dangerous Hunts** (Activision)	★★½

Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II

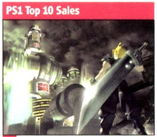
Final Fantasy X-2

Mafia

Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time

Source: EB Games, January 2004. Numbers reflect the sales at EB and its affiliated outlets and don't include other retail outlets. That's probably why you'll never see *Deer Hunter* crack the top 10. Japan's top 10 and the top 10 rentals come from other sources. Game descriptions written by the *OPM* staff.

PS1 Top 10 Sales

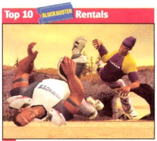


1	**Final Fantasy VII**	Square
2	**Namco Museum Vol. 3**	Namco
3	**Final Fantasy Tactics**	Square
4	**Elmo's Nums & Lttrs**	New Kid Co
5	**Final Fantasy VIII**	Square
6	**Final Fantasy IX**	Square
7	**Namco Museum Vol. 1**	Namco
8	**Final Fantasy Origins**	Square
9	**Star Ocean 2**	SCEA
10	**Crash Bash**	SCEA

Japan's Top 10 PS2 Games

1	**Fu'un Shinsen-gumi**	Genki
2	**Phantom Brave**	Nippon Ichi
3	**Hajime no Ippo 2**	ESP
4	**Star Ocean 3: DC**	Square Enix
5	**GT4 Prologue Edition**	Sony
6	**Minna no Golf 4**	Sony
7	**Momotaro Dentetsu 12**	Hudson
8	**Taiko no Tatsujin 3**	Namco
9	**Full Metal Alchemist**	Square Enix
10	**Shin Megami Tensei 3**	Atlus

Top 10 BLOCKBUSTER Rentals



1	**NFL Street (PS2)**	EA
2	**Mafia (PS2)**	Gathering
3	**True Crime (PS2)**	Activision
4	**DBZ: Budokai 2 (PS2)**	Atari
5	**NFL Street (XB)**	EA
6	**Tony Hawk's UG (PS2)**	Activision
7	**Mario Kart: DD!! (GC)**	Nintendo
8	**Manhunt (PS2)**	Rockstar
9	**Sonic Heroes (PS2)**	Sega
10	**MOH: RS (PS2)**	EA

SOURCE: BLOCKBUSTER, WEEK ENDING FEB. 1, 2004

Top 10 Sales, All Systems

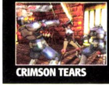
1	**NFL Street (PS2)**	EA
2	**NFL Street (XB)**	EA
3	**Sonic Heroes (GC)**	Sega
4	**NFSU (PS2)**	EA
5	**BG: DA2 (PS2)**	Interplay
6	**BG: DA2 (XB)**	Interplay
7	**Tony Hawk's UG (PS2)**	Activision
8	**Mario Kart: DD!! (GC)**	Nintendo
9	**Mafia (PS2)**	Gathering
10	**Halo (XB)**	Microsoft

Trend Spotter: Crimson

Apparently, game companies don't like the word "red" anymore. Nowadays everything is "crimson." What's the next "in" color, periwinkle? Check out these games featuring crimson...

CRIMSON SEA 2

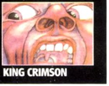
FATAL FRAME 2: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY



CRIMSON TEARS

ALABAMA
CRIMSON TIDE

ANY NCAA GAME



KING CRIMSON

You done stole my goods!

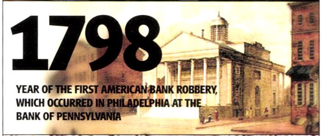
Sly is just the latest in a proud lineage of thieves, past and future.

600K

APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF COPIES OF *SLY COOPER* SOLD TO DATE

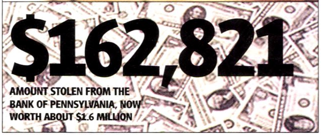
12/04

PROPOSED RELEASE DATE FOR *OCEAN'S 12*, WHICH HAS MORE HEISTS THAN *OCEAN'S 11*



1798

YEAR OF THE FIRST AMERICAN BANK ROBBERY, WHICH OCCURRED IN PHILADELPHIA AT THE BANK OF PENNSYLVANIA



$162,821

AMOUNT STOLEN FROM THE BANK OF PENNSYLVANIA, NOW WORTH ABOUT $1.6 MILLION

SOURCES: SCEA, WWW.IMDB.COM, AND WWW.USHISTORY.ORG.

Staff Sergeant **Anthony Leavitt.** Specialist **Renny Sotero.** 10th Special Forces Group.

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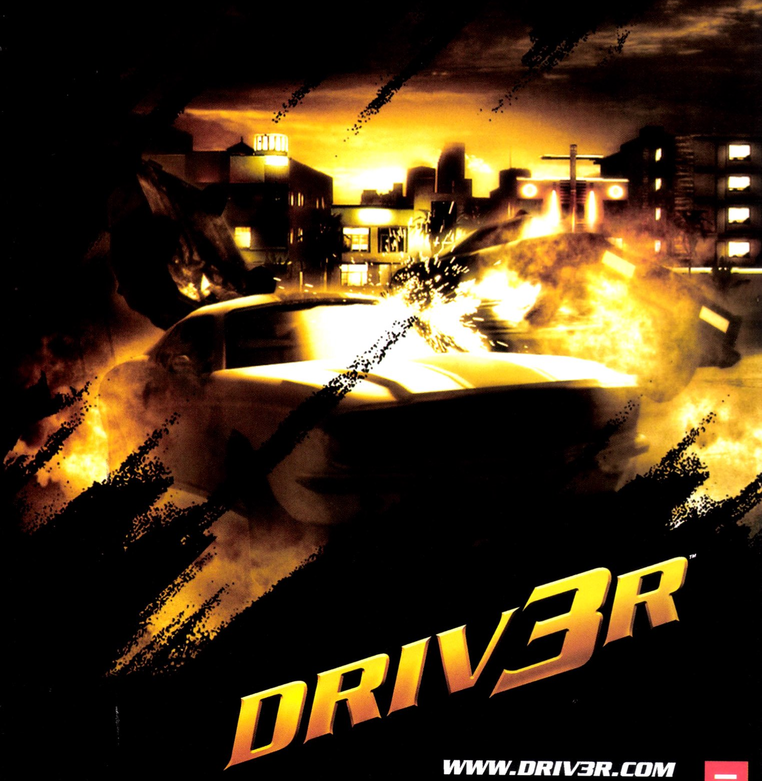

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PREVIEWS

The hits just keep on comin'!

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HITMAN CONTRACTS

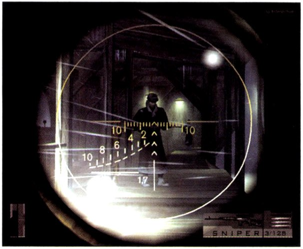
Confessions of a bald mind

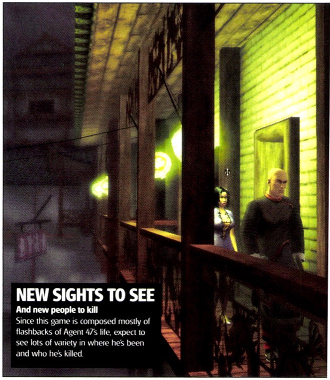
The third *Hitman* starts with a bang—that being a shot to the stomach for Agent 47. While bleeding profusely in a seedy hotel, the series' protagonist starts to deliriously remember past missions, beginning with the end of the first game.

Since most of *Contracts* occurs via flashback, you can almost call this "Hitman's Greatest Hits"—you're ostensibly playing some of his most memorable kills. Io has focused on creating a wider range of animations for Agent 47's assassination methods (strangulation animations, knife stabbings, etc.), as well as letting him use more objects as instruments of death (pool cues and meat hooks, anyone?).

Our favorite assassination method? Doctoring a soup with laxatives, watching the target make a beeline for the john, and then pumping him full of lead while he's on the pot. Kinda like Elvis!

Publisher: Eidos Interactive **Developer:** Io Interactive **Release Date:** Summer





NEW SIGHTS TO SEE

And new people to kill

Since this game is composed mostly of flashbacks of Agent 47's life, expect to see lots of variety in where he's been and who he's killed.

75

EVIL

Forgotten Realms
We doubt you'll forget it.

77

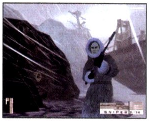
ROMAN

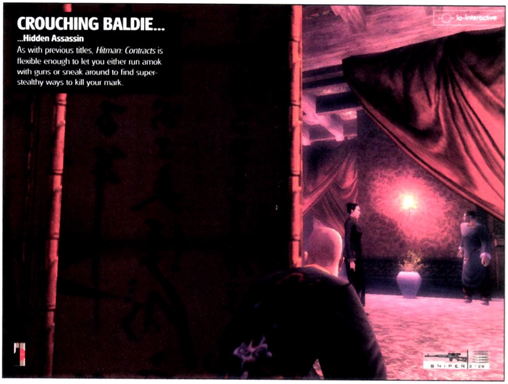
Shadow of Rome
Fight bad guys in a toga.

84

CLAWED

Monster Hunter
Menacing pussies await.

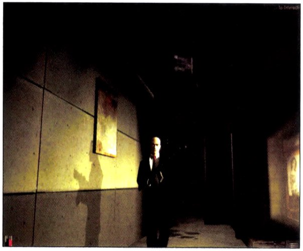


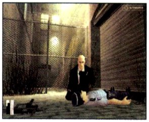


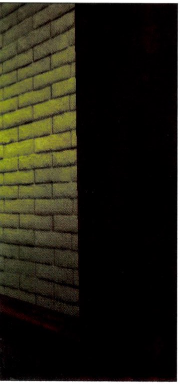
CROUCHING BALDIE...

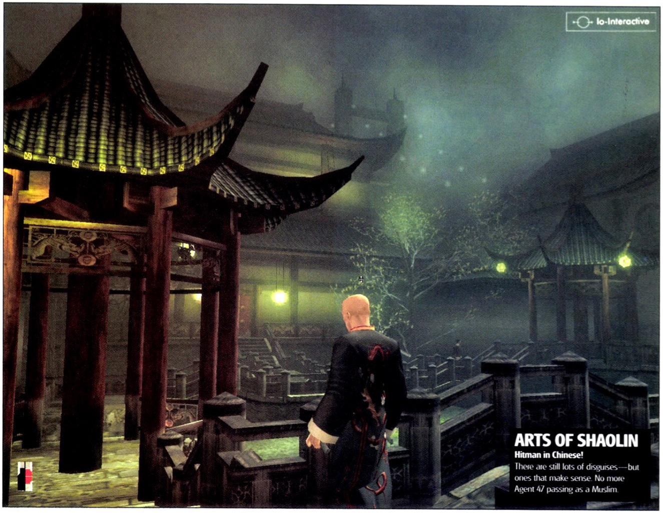
...Hidden Assassin

As with previous titles, *Hitman: Contracts* is flexible enough to let you either run amok with guns or sneak around to find super-stealthy ways to kill your mark.









ARTS OF SHAOLIN

Hitman in Chinese!

There are still lots of disguises—but ones that make sense. No more Agent 47 passing as a Muslim.

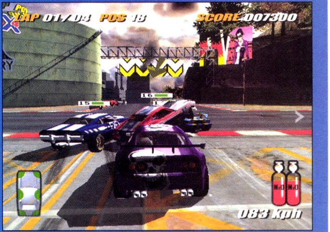
Games with destructible vehicles.

NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH...
Juice was a 1992 urban drama set in the ghettos of Harlem. It starred Omar Epps and Tupac Shakur.

JUICED

No matter how good it is, any racing game released in 2004 faces the distinct possibility of being as good as never released next to the monster that will be *Gran Turismo 4*. *Juiced* may prove just different enough to distinguish itself, though. A street-racing game in the vein of a *Midnight Club*, *Juiced* aims to incorporate the simulation aspects of a *GT* as well. Customization is key, as are teamplay and earning street cred.

Publisher: Acclaim **Developer:** Juice Games Ltd. **Release Date:** September



DESTRUCTION DERBY ARENAS

Old-school PlayStation gamers no doubt remember *Destruction Derby* as one of the first games to hit PS1. For its PS2 debut, the franchise not only bumps up the polygons, but also offers a 16-player online experience. Like other *Derbys*, *Arenas* focuses primarily on smashing and bashing your opponents en route to a first-place finish in highly destructible environments. Select from 20 customizable cars.

Publisher: Gathering **Developer:** Studio 33 **Release Date:** Spring

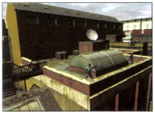
THE GETAWAY 2

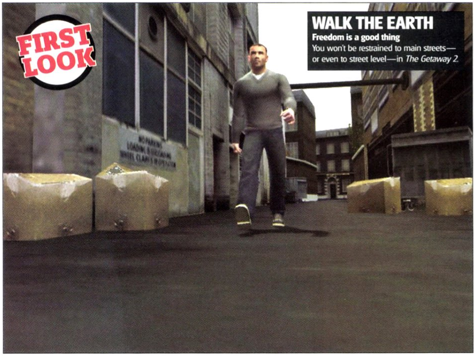
Get up, get down

The original *Getaway* certainly had its ups and downs—figuratively speaking. On the one hand, we got this spectacular virtual representation of downtown London...but on the other, the controls needed a serious coat of polish. *The Getaway 2* has *literal* ups and downs: You take part in rooftop shootouts, skulk around London's sewers, and even spend some time in the Underground [read: subway system]. That's because Sony's London studio is looking to expand on the first game's already impressive detail, offering even more indoor environments and more freedom to roam.

The in-depth story features a structure similar to the first game's, wherein you follow the plot from different viewpoints. But this time, expect more than two point-of-view characters. In other words, more real estate, more characters, more detail. Sounds good to us.

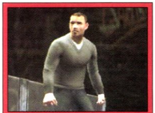
Publisher: Sony CEA **Developer:** Sony CE London **Release Date:** Fall





WALK THE EARTH

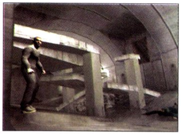
Freedom is a good thing
You won't be restrained to main streets—or even to street level—in *The Getaway 2*.

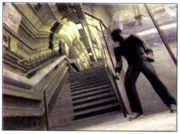


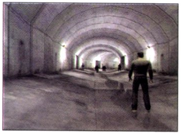
CHARACTER STUDY

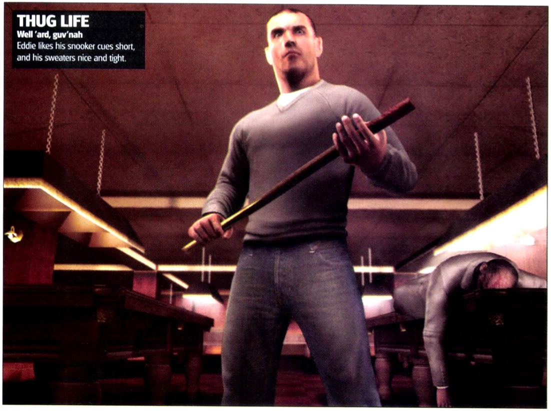
A face only a mother could love?
Eddie O'Connor, the first character from *The Getaway 2* shown to the press, is no kindhearted sap with a sweet wife and kid—he's a boxer, bouncer, and small-time crook. Looks like you can expect things to be a bit seedier than in the first game right from the start.

200 Number of real-life Eddie O'Connors found on Yahoo! People Search. But how many have criminal records?





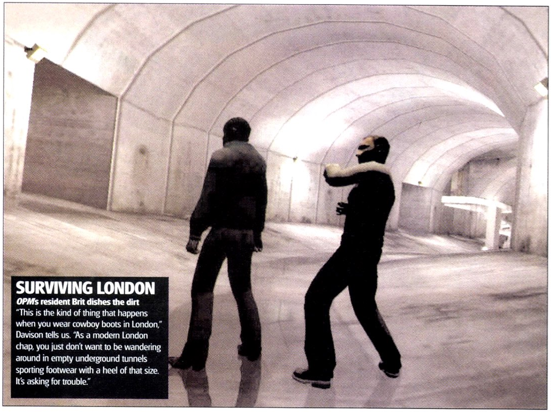




THUG LIFE

Well 'ard, guv'nah

Eddie likes his snooker cues short, and his sweaters nice and tight.



SURVIVING LONDON

***OPM*'s resident Brit dishes the dirt**

"This is the kind of thing that happens when you wear cowboy boots in London," Davison tells us. "As a modern London chap, you just don't want to be wandering around in empty underground tunnels sporting footwear with a heel of that size. It's asking for trouble."

ASKA
SHE'S THE ARTISTIC TYPE.
THOUGH HER ARTS ARE PURELY MARTIAL.
CY GIRLS
09:27:36

Everyone needs a glowy, soul-sucking gauntlet.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH? This flying monster in *Onimusha 3* sure looks a *lot* like the dragon in *Willow*.

ONIMUSHA 3
DEMON SIEGE

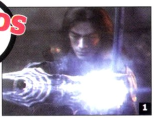
HANDS ON

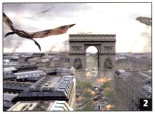
The first hour revealed

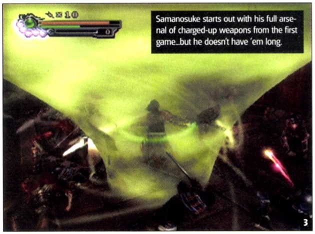
Curious about the *Onimusha* finale? Look no further than this preview. Simply match each explanation below with its designated screenshot.

1) You just have to see the *amazing* FMV sequence that kicks things off!
2) Suddenly, demons Samanosuke faced in feudal Japan appear in modern-day Paris, killing anyone they see. Jacques fights back.
3) Cut to ancient Japan. Sammy is part of a samurai army invading Nobunaga's keep. Soon he confronts Nobunaga and defeats a bodyguard.
4) A mysterious bowl of energy zaps Samanosuke to the future!
5) Now in modern-day Paris, Sam helps Jacques fight off demons. "A samurai?" says the confused soldier—then *he* gets zapped!
6) Alone, Sam battles demons en route to the Arc de Triomphe.
7) There he finds a mighty pair of dual blades and soon confronts Michelle, Jacques' fiancée (and a future playable character!).
8) After a few skirmishes, Sammy takes on a mighty mech boss.
9) Now in the past, Jacques sees a huge demon assaulting his son. Out of nowhere, an electric whip materializes in Jacques' hand. He uses it well, but his son mysteriously disappears from his arms.
10) A big blue glowing guy talks to Jacques and gives him a fairy pal.
11) Jacques whips his way through a bevy of baddies.
12) He meets Sam in the samurai's own time. The two become allies.

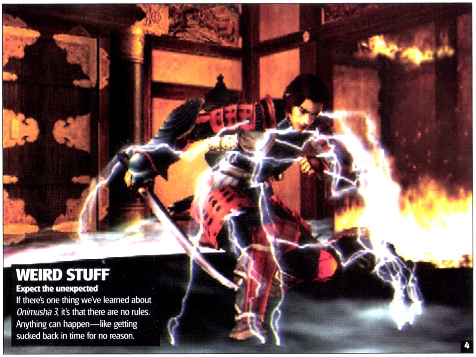
Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Capcom **Release Date:** May







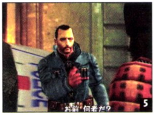
Samanosuke starts out with his full arsenal of charged-up weapons from the first game...but he doesn't have 'em long.

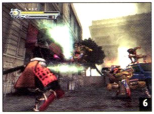


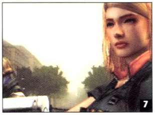
WEIRD STUFF

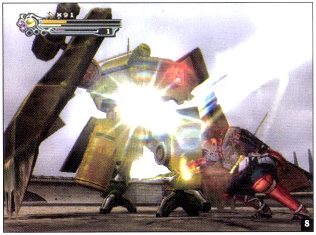
Expect the unexpected

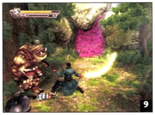
If there's one thing we've learned about *Onimusha 3*, it's that there are no rules. Anything can happen—like getting sucked back in time for no reason.

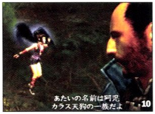


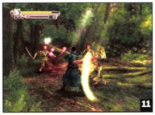


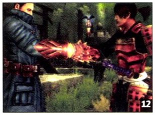








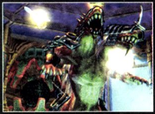


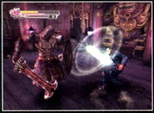


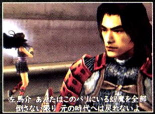
FROM THEN ON...

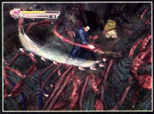
No more spoilers

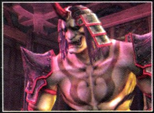
As you know, almost every screenshot on this page occurs within the first hour of *Onimusha 3: Demon Siege*. Well, except for the ones below. We won't spoil anything for you, though. We'll just go ahead and let you figure out what's going on...

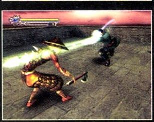


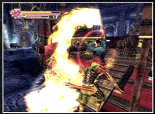



左馬介 あんたはこのパリにいる幻魔を全部
倒さない限り 元の時代へは戻れないよ







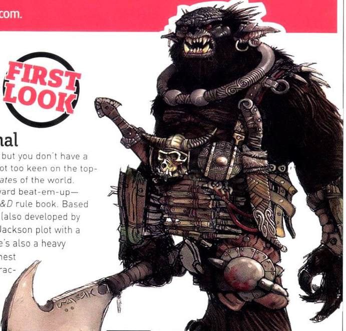


382 Number of listings for *Forgotten Realms* books on Amazon.com.

FORGOTTEN REALMS

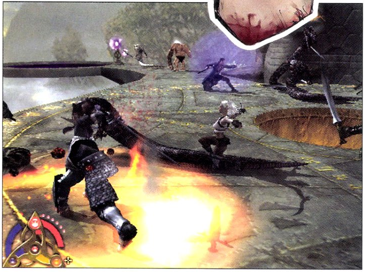
FIRST LOOK

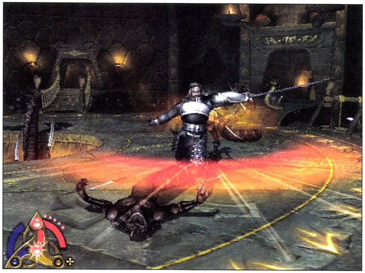
Pens, paper, Cheetos optional

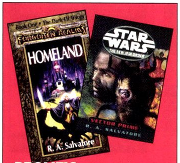


So you want to get your *Dungeons & Dragons* on, but you don't have a group of fellow antisocialites handy and you're not too keen on the top-down, hack-n-slash experience of the *Baldur's Gates* of the world. You're in luck: *Forgotten Realms* is a straightforward beat-em-up—combos and all—that's solidly grounded in the *D&D* rule book. Based on *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers'* engine (also developed by Stormfront), the game replaces the Tolkien-via-Jackson plot with a story by best-selling author R.A. Salvatore. There's also a heavy emphasis on party play: To get through the toughest levels, you need to switch among your three characters—a fighter, a rogue, and a sorcerer—on the fly. No word yet on multiplayer, but we're hoping for some online play.

Publisher: Atari **Developer:** Stormfront **Release Date:** Fall







Book One · The Dark Elf Trilogy
Forgotten Realms
HOMELAND
R. A. Salvatore
STAR WARS
THE NEW JEDI ORDER
VECTOR PRIME
R. A. SALVATORE

PROLIFIC

How many books have *you* written?

Fantasy/sci-fi author R.A. ("Bob") Salvatore has penned well over 30 books, most of them set in the *Forgotten Realms* universe and many of them best-sellers. He also killed Chewbacca in the book *Star Wars: Vector Prime*. The bastard.

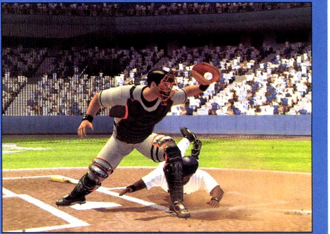
UPPING THE ANTE

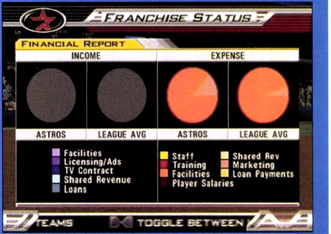
Fantasy approaches reality

Were you as impressed as we were by the detailed characters and huge battle scenes in *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*? You ain't seen nothin' yet. The *Forgotten Realms* engine boasts characters with twice the graphical detail, and it can push even more characters around in a scene.

ICE
SHE'D LOVE TO
TAKE YOU OUT.
FROM 20 METERS.
CY GIRLS
07:18:54

9/7/79 ESPN's *SportsCenter* debuted on this date. Sports broadcasting would never be the same again.

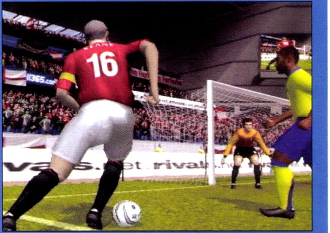



FRANCHISE STATUS
FINANCIAL REPORT
INCOME
EXPENSE
ASTROS
LEAGUE AVG
ASTROS
LEAGUE AVG
Facilities
Licensing/Ads
TV Contract
Shared Revenue
Loans
Staff
Training
Facilities
Player Salaries
Shared Rev
Marketing
Loan Payments
TEAMS
TOGGLE BETWEEN

MLB 2005

It may not look as pretty as the other baseball games, but *MLB 2005* can't be slighted for its franchise mode. This thing is *robust*, with as much stuff to do off the field (marketing, balancing budgets, appeasing fans and players, etc.) as on. You even have the option to realign leagues to your liking. Gameplay seems competent enough as well, although it lacks anything to truly distinguish it from other games.

Publisher: Sony CEA **Developer:** 989 Studios **Release Date:** March



WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2005

With the amazing *Winning Eleven 7* to compete with, 989's take on the world's most popular sport returns with a bunch of features to keep soccer fans busy. There are approximately 900 teams representing various league and international squads, as well as great teams from the past. Career mode starts you off with a fledgling school soccer club, but you can work your way up the ranks to coach a superstar team.

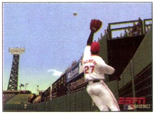
Publisher: Sony CEA **Developer:** 989 Sports **Release Date:** April

ESPN MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

Duh nuh NUH! Duh nuh NUH!

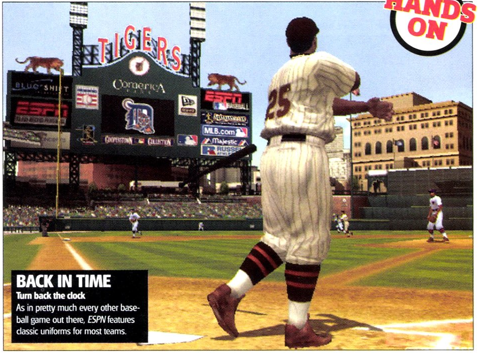
If you saw our last issue, you know that Sega has a lot to live up to going up against EA's excellent *MVP Baseball 2004*. But is the ESPN integration—the new camera angles, the Jon Miller/Karl Ravech announcing team, the GameCast presentation for simmed games—enough to make *ESPN Major League Baseball* rise above *MVP*? At this point...not quite. It certainly plays well, though, and features like players' Confidence meters and a pitcher's Effort gauge add a degree of unique personality to the game. And if nothing else, rumor has it that *ESPN* has another yet-to-be-announced feature in store. We'll tell you what it is in next month's baseball-review roundup.

Publisher: Sega/ESPN Videogames **Developer:** Blue Sky **Release Date:** March



Miguel Tejada

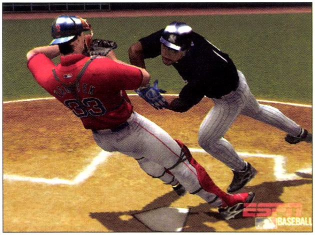
HANDS ON

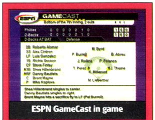

TIGERS
Comerica
ESPN
MLB.com
Majestic
25

BACK IN TIME

Turn back the clock

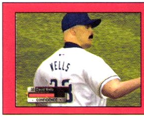
As in pretty much every other baseball game out there, *ESPN* features classic uniforms for most teams.





ESPN GameCast in game

Actual ESPN GameCast on Internet



CONFIDENCE

Try not to make your players suck

Each player's Confidence meter goes up or down depending on his performance. Of course, the greater one's confidence, the better he plays. Here, Dave's confidence soars after a big K. That's one out closer to game over...and a huge victory dinner!

GAMECAST

Putting more ESPN into *ESPN*

Instead of just showing you a score, *ESPN* presents a GameCast similar—but not exactly identical—to its Internet play-by-play feature at ESPN.com. Manager mode allows you to jump in at any time to finish the game. Can you save Millwood from his current jam?

DID YOU KNOW?
As the size of the Roman Empire grew, so did the length of its togas. At the height of its power, togas were up to 20 feet long.

SHADOW OF ROME

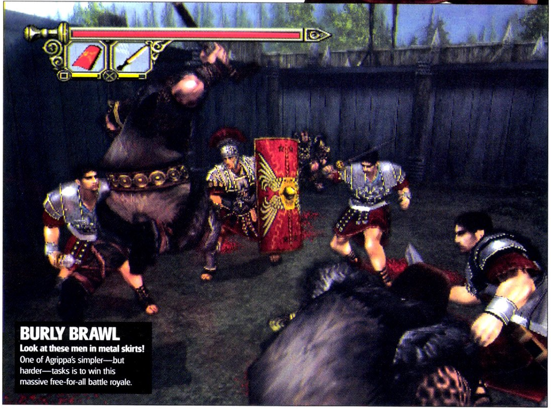
Do you like gladiator games?

After he's fully produced *Onimusha 3*, Keiji Inafune wants nothing more to do with samurai. Rather, his next project involves...well angry Romans and togas. But you can already see Inafune's influence in *Shadow of Rome*. Just as *Onimusha* began with Nobunaga's death, the death of Julius Caesar starts off *Rome* (Inafune believes he's the most recognizable Roman).

You mostly play as Agrippa, the son of an accused co-conspirator in Caesar's death. Agrippa has decided to fight in the gladiator games to free his father, and his portion of the game involves a lot of the hack-n-slash expected by *Onimusha* fans. One big difference, though: You're tearing apart people here, not fantastical demons. This is one *bloody* game.

Things slow down a bit in the stealth portions. As Octavius investigating Caesar's death, you use wily tricks like knocking guards over with pots or using disguises to fake your way around the castle. Let's see Sam Fisher put on an enemy toga!

Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Capcom **Release Date:** Winter



BURLY BRAWL
Look at these men in metal skirts!
One of Agrippa's simpler—but harder—tasks is to win this massive free-for-all battle royale.

2 GIRLS.
2 WORLDS.
1 HARDCORE MISSION.

2 DISCS • 2 ADVENTURES

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON: ASKA, WITH HER LETHAL NINJA SKILLS – OR ICE, A FIREARMS EXPERT WITH NERVES OF STEEL. THEN TAKE THE FIGHT AGAINST EVIL FROM THE REAL WORLD INTO CYBERSPACE, WHERE THE RULES ARE RADICALLY DIFFERENT - BUT THE ACTION'S EVERY BIT AS HARDCORE.

CY GIRLS

PlayStation®2

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood
Strong Language
Suggestive Themes
Violence

KONAMI
WWW.KONAMI.COM/USA

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Serious Sam Kennedy runs 1UP.com.

DID YOU KNOW?
John Clark (Willem Dafoe in *Clear and Present Danger*, Liev Schreiber in *The Sum of All Fears*) is Rainbow Six.

SERIOUS SAM
NEXT ENCOUNTER

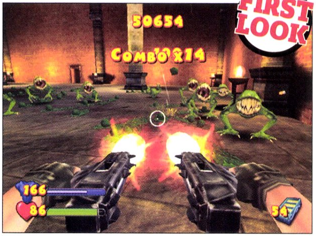
Beware of knife-wielding monkeys

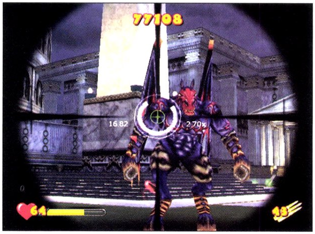
PC and Xbox gamers know *Serious Sam* as a glorious, budget-priced throwback to the "kill legions of baddies with tons of weapons" era of first-person shooters. *Next Encounter* is a whole new game that brings the killology fun to PS2.

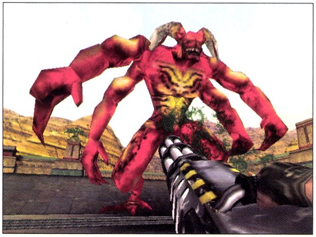
Besides tons and tons of enemies to terminate (including the best enemy of all time, the screaming headless kamikaze-bomber zombie), *Next* features eight-player online action and vehicles like jeeps and submarines. Levels take place in Rome, China, and even Atlantis, and unique enemies inhabit each area (you can't go wrong with the knife-wielding mad monkeys of China). *Next* may not have the best A.I. or cut-scenes, but we'll settle for that pure frantic-action feeling.

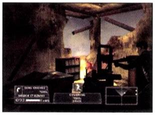
Publisher: Global Star **Developer:** Climax **Release Date:** Spring

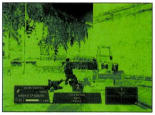
FIRST LOOK











RAINBOW SIX 3

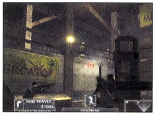
Breach, frag, clear, repeat

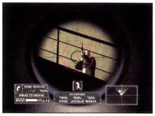
Rainbow Six 3 is a first-person tactical shooter developed by the *Splinter Cell* team using *Splinter Cell* technology.

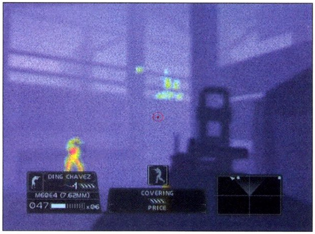
For those of you who didn't run down to EB to put in your preorder after reading that one sentence, allow us to dish up a few more details. First of all, this ain't no arcade shooter. *Rainbow Six* is all about realism, from believable settings to painstakingly accurate renderings of weapons. Luckily, some very smart A.I. teammates help protect you from flying bullets. You can order your team around by shouting commands into a headset or using a smart context-sensitive command system to accomplish the same goals.

Best of all, you can go head-to-head with five other players online in survival, team survival, and respawning sharpshooter modes. A worthy competitor for *SOCOM* at last? We'll see....

Publisher: Ubisoft **Developer:** Ubisoft Shanghai **Release Date:** Spring



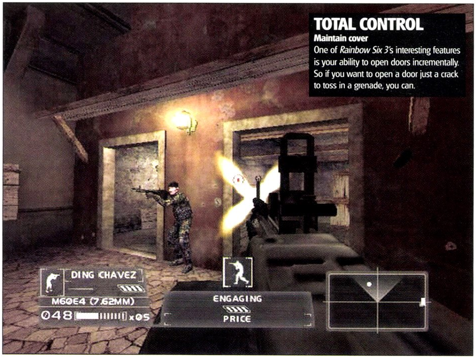




DETAILS, DETAILS

How true to life is *Rainbow Six 3*?

When you hit the Reload button, your character just pops out a clip and pops another in. But when you completely empty your gun, your character switches clips and then jacks a new round into the chamber. This is how guns work, so this is how the game works.

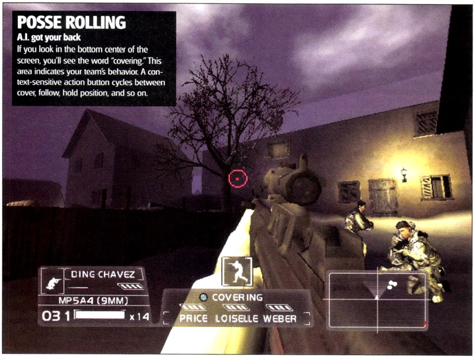


TOTAL CONTROL

Maintain cover

One of *Rainbow Six 3*'s interesting features is your ability to open doors incrementally. So if you want to open a door just a crack to toss in a grenade, you can.

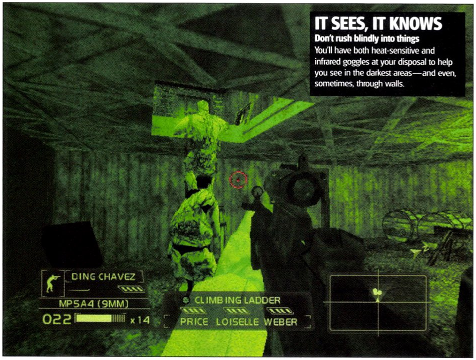
42 Total dead of the infamous Donner Party of the late 1840s—many of them eaten by fellow travelers to survive the harsh wintry conditions. Donner Pass is a location in *Darkwatch.*



POSSE ROLLING

A.I. got your back

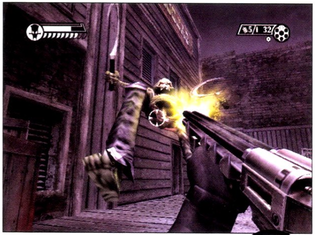
If you look in the bottom center of the screen, you'll see the word "covering." This area indicates your team's behavior. A context-sensitive action button cycles between cover, follow, hold position, and so on.



IT SEES, IT KNOWS

Don't rush blindly into things

You'll have both heat-sensitive and infrared goggles at your disposal to help you see in the darkest areas—and even, sometimes, through walls.



DARKWATCH
CURSE OF THE WEST

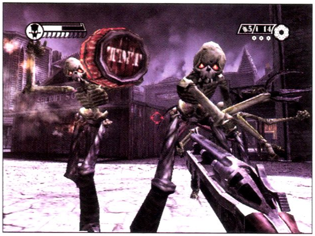
FIRST LOOK

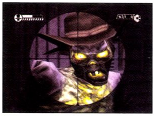
Just another VWFPS

You know how those vampire Western first-person shooters go. OK...so maybe you don't. But trust us: With the upcoming *Darkwatch* primed to be the sole representative of this new sub-subgenre, it can truly be said that once you've played one VWFPS, you've played 'em all.

With a name like Jericho Cross, your character has gotta be a badass. Recently turned into a vampire himself, Cross has one noble mission: to blow away all the suckheads in league with the vampire lord who did this to him. As a member of Darkwatch (a rogue group of other vengeful vamps who have protected man since the dawn of civilization), Cross has a wide assortment of weapons typical of the late 19th century—everything from guns to...well, rocket launchers. (OK...maybe not *typical.*)

Publisher: Sammy Studios **Developer:** Sammy Studios **Release Date:** Holiday 2004



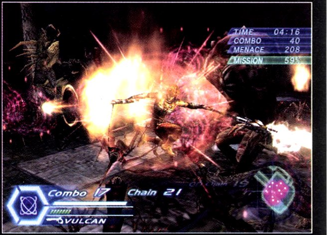


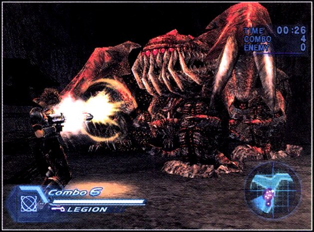
HI HO, SHADOW!

You're undead, and so's your horse

When Cross isn't destroying evil in first person by himself, he's riding his trusty undead steed, Shadow. (Obviously, once you've entered the eternal darkness that is being a vampire, you have other things to worry about than an original name for your horse.)

IT IS WRITTEN... *"If one is to fight bravely, he must not be held back by the silly nonsense of survival stuck in his head." —Hagakure: The Book of the Samurai*

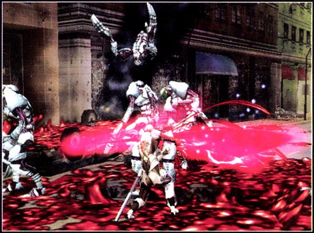




CRIMSON SEA 2

You'd be forgiven for thinking this game has something to do with, you know, *water*. Instead, *Crimson Sea 2* is a free-roaming, sci-fi shoot-em-up in the great tradition of *Apocalypse* and *Winback*. But *CS2* throws an interesting twist into the mix by allowing the player to slow down time (no, it's not bullet time). Co-op and competitive multiplay, as well as hand-to-hand attacks, add further alien-blasting flavor.

Publisher: Koei **Developer:** Koei **Release Date:** April



NANOBREAKER

So, what's Koji "The *Castlevania* Guy" Igarashi up to when he's not producing the next Belmont versus Dracula installment? Something much, much...*smaller*. At least from a scientific perspective. Nanotechnology creations gone awry are causing havoc in *Nanobreaker*'s not-so-distant future, and only you—equipped with your trusty Plasma Blade—have the goods to take 'em out. Expect blood. *Lots* of blood.

Publisher: Konami **Developer:** Konami **Release Date:** Fall

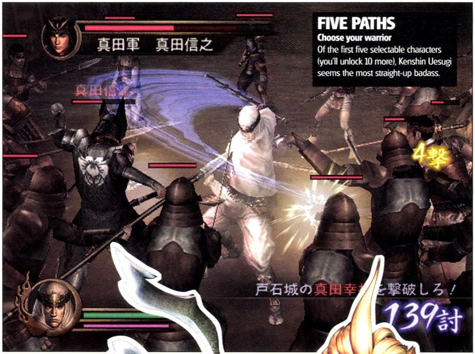
SAMURAI WARRIORS

HANDS ON

Out with the Romance

As we first reported a couple months ago, *Samurai Warriors* takes the *Dynasty Warriors* formula (i.e., you're one soldier on a field of thousands—and you kick ass) but changes the setting from *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*–era China to feudal Japan. Now that we've played it, it's safe to say that you'll fit into one of these three groups: 1) If you haven't grown tired of the *Dynasty* series yet, you'll love *Samurai*. 2) If you've never played a *Dynasty* game, you'll like it—possibly love it. 3) If you thought the series grew stale by *Dynasty 3*, the change in geography, new characters, three-army battles, and greater focus on indoor levels won't change your mind. Not even the sexy Kunoichi.

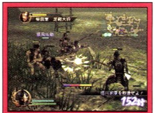
Publisher: Koei **Developer:** Omega Force **Release Date:** March



FIVE PATHS

Choose your warrior

Of the first five selectable characters (you'll unlock 10 more), Kenshin Uesugi seems the most straight-up badass.



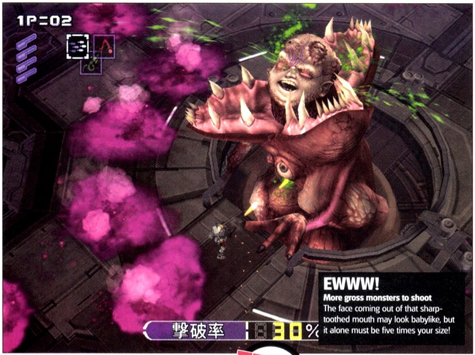
THREE ARMIES

But which to take down first?

At times in *Samurai Warriors*, your fighter takes part in battles between three armies, with victory achieved only when the commanding officers of both enemy groups go down. Notice how the Morale meter in this screen is divided into three colors. Blue is screwed!

"Maeda Keiji roared in the fiercest battles," Koei tells us. Yeah..."roared" seems like an appropriate word.

GAMES WE'LL NEVER SEE In *Neo Iran Contra,* you, as Lt. Col. Oliver North, must free American hostages using any means necessary! Sell arms if you need to. And if Congress questions you about it? Lie!



EWWW!

More gross monsters to shoot

The face coming out of that sharp-toothed mouth may look babylike, but it alone must be five times your size!

NEO CONTRA

FIRST LOOK

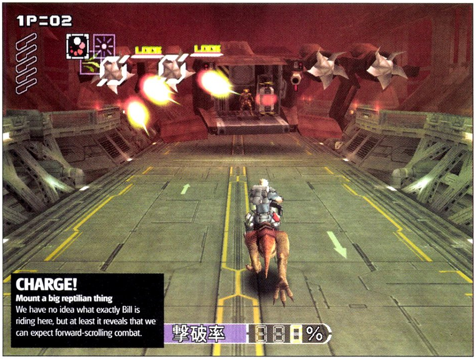
Contra tries that 3D thing again

You might not know this (or perhaps you've blocked the memory), but *Contra* games haven't always been the primarily 2D-style shooters seen most recently in *Contra: Shattered Soldier.* That's because once upon a time, Konami released *Contra: Legacy of War*, a 3D game. Man, did it suck!

So, with the upcoming release of the similarly isometric *Neo Contra*, what's to say the *Legacy* won't continue? At this point, no one can really draw any sort of conclusion, as playable code remains safely locked within Konami HQ. But damn, does the video we've seen ever *look* cool!

Story has never played a big part of *Contra*, but Konami promises... well, *something* for *Neo*, anyway. Joined by Genbei Jaguer Yagyu, a mysterious samurai from the distant future (of course!), Bill Rizer returns. And remember all those mechanical monstrosities and grotesque boss characters that so characterized *Soldier*? That's what they're up against.

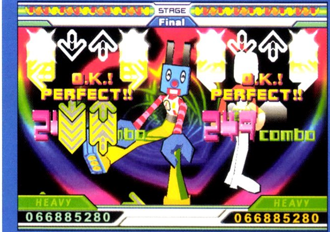
Publisher: Konami **Developer:** Konami **Release Date:** November

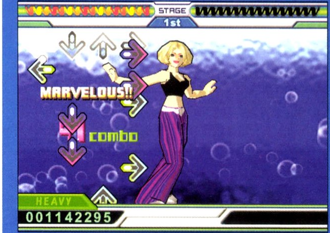


CHARGE!

Mount a big reptilian thing

We have no idea what exactly Bill is riding here, but at least it reveals that we can expect forward-scrolling combat.

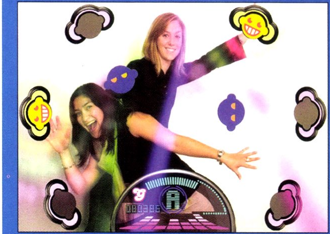




DANCE DANCE REVOLUTION EXTREME

What's so "extreme" about the next *Dance Dance Revolution*? Good question. Though basically the same ol' rhythm thing again, the addition of 100-plus minutes of music—much of it licensed stuff you probably know (no specifics yet)—should liven things up. Most notably, the Oni feature first seen in *DDRMAX* returns as a full-fledged game mode. Miss four steps, you lose. Totally *extreme*, huh?

Publisher: Konami **Developer:** Konami **Release Date:** Fall

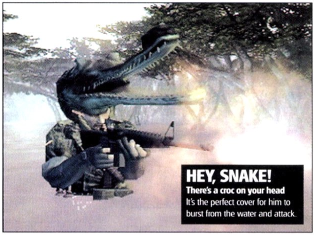


EYE TOY: GROOVE

At last we can confirm the U.S. release of the next Eye Toy–specific title. *Groove* features 25 licensed tracks from a variety of popular artists of the last four decades, including Madonna ("Music"), Elvis Presley ("A Little Less Conversation"), The Jackson 5 ("ABC"), and Fatboy Slim ("Praise You"). Gameplay resembles *Dance Dance Revolution*'s, except you flail your arms as well as your legs—on TV!

Publisher: Sony CEA **Developer:** Sony CE London **Release Date:** Spring

OVERHEARD
"Ooh...shell shock." –Any given Ninja Turtle upon dying in the original *TMNT* arcade classic.



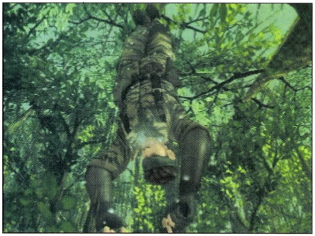
HEY, SNAKE!
There's a croc on your head
It's the perfect cover for him to burst from the water and attack.

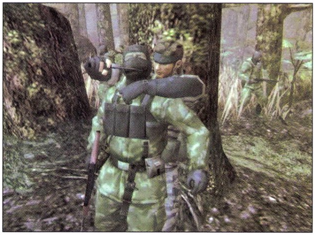
METAL GEAR SOLID 3
SNAKE EATER

What we know so far

Set in a 1960s jungle, *Snake Eater* allegedly chronicles the Big Boss story line and features a new approach to level design. Snake (or whoever the protagonist really is) has an abundance of new moves that allow him to interact with his environment more realistically. He can hang from trees, wade through water, and capture various creatures to eat. The emphasis this time is on survival, as Snake sets traps, tracks his enemies more effectively, and even tends to his wounds in a far more realistic manner. The formfitting, wound-squeezing sneak suit is nowhere in sight, but if rumors are to be believed, there may be a space suit at some point in the game. Could Snake be heading into orbit? Stranger things have happened.

Publisher: Konami **Developer:** Konami **Release Date:** November





SHELLSHOCK
NAM '67

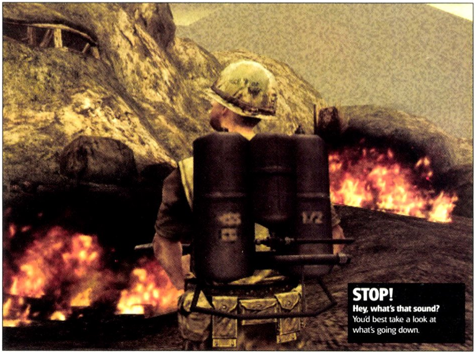
FIRST LOOK

Apocalypse now and then

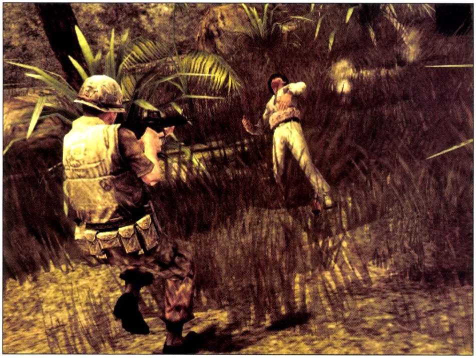
Apparently, those boys at Guerrilla Games aren't content with just making *Killzone*. They're also making another game—one that features honest-to-god *guerrillas—Shellshock: Nam '67*.

As an American recruit, you're thrown right into the Vietnam War in, well, 1967. Guerrilla promises gritty, intense combat featuring large-scale battles against the NVA, stealthy assassination missions in the jungle, booby traps, and even some uncomfortable napalming here and there. (By the way, you can take a gander at the screens and see for yourself that *Shellshock* uses the same engine as *Killzone*.) To add to the horrors of war, soldiers don't simply die—they painfully bleed out and may still fight while injured.

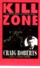
Publisher: Eidos Interactive **Developer:** Guerrilla Games **Release Date:** Summer



STOP!
Hey, what's that sound?
You'd best take a look at what's going down.



NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH...
Kill Zone by Craig Roberts is another one of those JFK conspiracy books. Most Amazon readers love it.



DID YOU KNOW? The term "Molotov cocktail" dates back to WWII, when Russian civilians first used the weapon against German tanks. It's named for V.M. Molotov, then foreign minister of the Soviet Union.

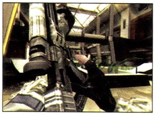
TAKE YOUR HAT OFF
But leave the cowl on (we think)
We haven't seen this dude yet. Question is, is he a baldie with his helmet off, or is that some sort of mask on his head?

KILLZONE

The latest on the would-be Halo killer

Even though it's still without a U.S. publisher (we're guessing it'll end up exactly where you'd think it would—at Sony), we've managed to obtain a few morsels of information on this feverishly anticipated postapocalyptic first-person shooter. First of all, Guerrilla is dead set on having the game ready for Sony Europe by the end of summer. This might not sound like much, but it gives us strong hope for a fall release out here. From a gameplay perspective, the gun playground level (which Guerrilla used to demonstrate the game's magnificent and plentiful weapons during our studio visit) is now going to be included in the final version as a practice level. Here, you can let loose with any of the 20-plus heavy-duty weapons you get to use during the game, but without any ammo concerns. We know this isn't a whole lot of new info, but we promise more as soon as we get to grips with the latest version.

Publisher: TBA **Developer:** Guerrilla Games **Release Date:** Fall



TANKS A LOT
But you can't have one
Hulking steel behemoths like these appear from time to time, but unfortunately, you never get to commandeer one for yourself.

COLD WINTER

One-man wrecking crew

The life of a secret agent is a tough one—if captured, the agency you work for immediately disavows any knowledge of your existence. That's the scenario in *Cold Winter*, in which the Chinese army captures you and throws you into prison. Fortunately, a fellow agent takes it upon herself to bust you out of your cell. But getting out of the prison—not to mention out of the *country*—is an entirely different story.

Cold Winter features an impressive physics engine that lets you interact with all kinds of objects in the environment, including furniture. Enemy A.I. is no slouch, either. Troops provide cover fire for their comrades, tip over tables to take cover, and do just about anything else they can to prevent your escape. Luckily, there are plenty of weapons, some of which you have to assemble by finding different items, like the gas, bottle, and rag combination for the ever-popular Molotov cocktail.

Publisher: Vivendi Universal **Developer:** Swordfish Studios **Release Date:** Spring

Monster Hunter cats vs. *Suikoden IV* kitties: Who wins? We all do!

QUALITY CINEMA
"Kiss me and I'll claw you to death!"
–Tagline for *Cat People* (1942)

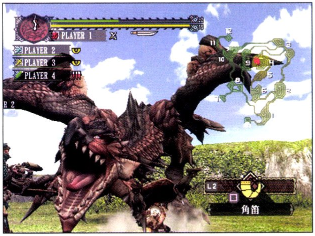
MONSTER HUNTER

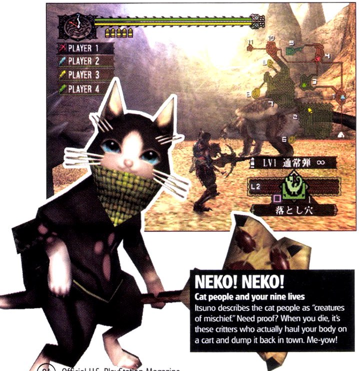
Cats and dinosaurs and bears, oh my!

Monster Hunter has one simple but epically cool premise: You hunt monsters. Not deer, not wolves—not even the occasional marmoset—just monsters. You go after anything from fast raptorlike critters to majestic dragons. And (though you can) you don't have to hunt them by yourself—so hook up with three others online for an epic hunting trip.

While much of the gameplay consists of action-packed hack-n-slash, cooperative traps also play a key role. Producer Kenji Itsuno demonstrated for us an intricate trap involving three people: One person lays down a pit trap and sets some explosives around it. Another player is the unlucky bait who pisses off the dragon and runs toward the trap. When the dragon is caught, the third player jumps in and detonates all the explosives, severely weakening the dragon before the players slice off its head, Éowyn versus Witch King style.

Publisher: Capcom **Developer:** Capcom **Release Date:** Fall





NEKO! NEKO!

Cat people and your nine lives

Itsuno describes the cat people as "creatures of mischief." Need proof? When you die, it's these critters who actually haul your body on a cart and dump it back in town. Me-yow!

FIRST LOOK

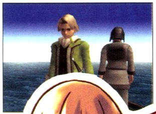
SUIKODEN IV

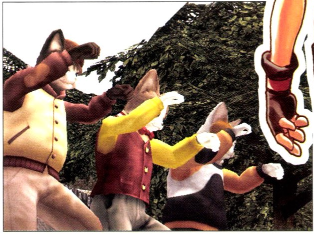
When "more of the same" is just fine

As disappointing as we found *Suikoden III*, we're still excited about the next game in this legendary RPG series. If you've played any of the previous titles, you already know the drill: You know you can recruit up to 108 different characters to join your party. You no doubt remember the home base that grows and evolves along with your character. You're familiar with the team-attack system, which encourages you to experiment with different combinations of characters and attacks in battle. And you know to expect lovely art design and a top-notch musical score.

So what's new? From what we've seen so far, not a whole lot. The refined 3D engine introduced in *Suikoden III* allows for more complex character models, dynamic lighting, and improved detail. No word on the story yet, except that you get to explore a vast ocean in your own ship. Plus: kitties! Kitties that fight!

Publisher: Konami **Developer:** Konami **Release Date:** Fall





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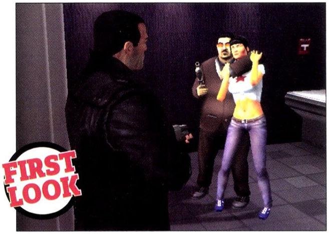


FIRST LOOK

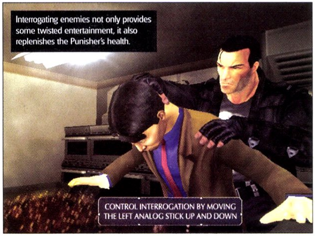
THE PUNISHER

Welcome back, Frank

Remember that issue of *The Punisher* in which Frank Castle smothered the Russian with an enormously obese man? Well, we haven't seen anything like that in his PS2 game (unfortunately!), but THQ did demonstrate some of its gruesome interrogation sequences. While most of the game is traditional third-person shooting, Volition has added a feature wherein the Punisher can grab a goon and interrogate him with the analog stick. Interrogations range from generic ones like "smash face repeatedly into ground" or "shove gun in face" to environment-specific ones like "slam door on head" or "dunk in deep fryer."

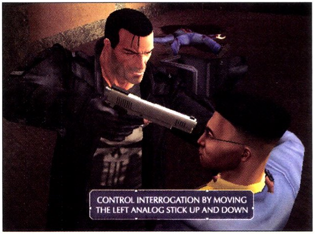
Garth Ennis, Marvel's current scribe for *The Punisher*, is writing the script, and the game lifts a few levels directly from his comic run (specifically, Mercenary Island and the NYC Zoo). There may even be some Hollywood-class voice talent involved, but it's too early to say.

Publisher: THQ **Developer:** Volition **Release Date:** Fall



Interrogating enemies not only provides some twisted entertainment, it also replenishes the Punisher's health.

CONTROL INTERROGATION BY MOVING
THE LEFT ANALOG STICK UP AND DOWN



CONTROL INTERROGATION BY MOVING
THE LEFT ANALOG STICK UP AND DOWN

STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

HANDS ON

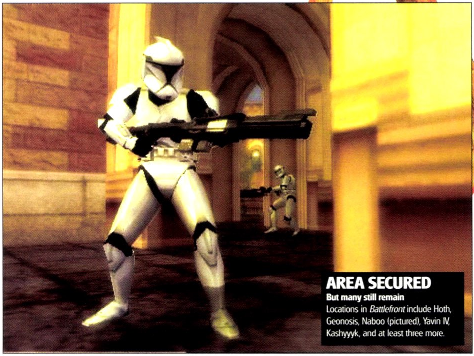
Beware of Ewok

We're still superexcited about *Battlefront*'s 16 players duking it out online, *Star Wars* style. We're looking forward to shooting Imperials with a buddy, hopping into a snowspeeder, then taking out an AT-AT—and knowing that every character in this scenario is a human.

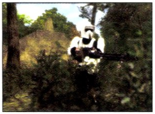
Our favorite revelation so far? Indigenous life taking potshots targeted at both sides. If you're fighting on Tatooine, expect to dodge the gaffi sticks of Tusken Raiders. Meanwhile, Rebels on Endor can look forward to some helpful Ewok buddies fighting the good fight alongside you. (No, you can't shoot them.)

When this game comes out, keep an eye out for Team OPM jumping into a Clone Wars gunship and taking out fools left and right. You too!

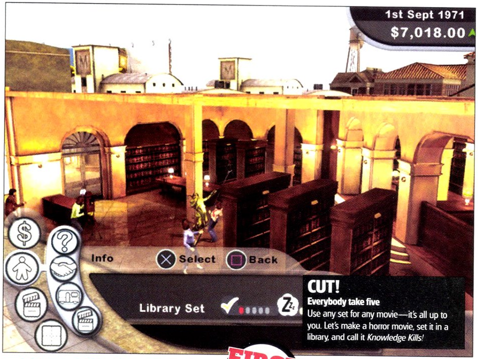
Publisher: LucasArts **Developer:** Pandemic **Release Date:** Fall



AREA SECURED
But many still remain
Locations in *Battlefront* include Hoth, Geonosis, Naboo (pictured), Yavin IV, Kashyyyk, and at least three more.



OVERHEARD "It's the movies that have really been running things in America ever since they were invented. They show you what to do, how to do it, when to do it, how to feel about it, and how to look how you feel about it." –Andy Warhol



CUT!
Everybody take five
Use any set for any movie—it's all up to you. Let's make a horror movie, set it in a library, and call it *Knowledge Kills!*

THE MOVIES

FIRST LOOK

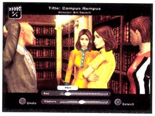
Film school on your PS2

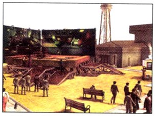
If you can't afford the tuition for the USC School of Cinema-Television, look no further than *The Movies*. This superambitious title puts you in control of a movie studio from 1900 to 2010. Not only do you lay out the studio itself (researching technologies and putting down structures), but you also manage your actors—which sort of feels like controlling a Sim.

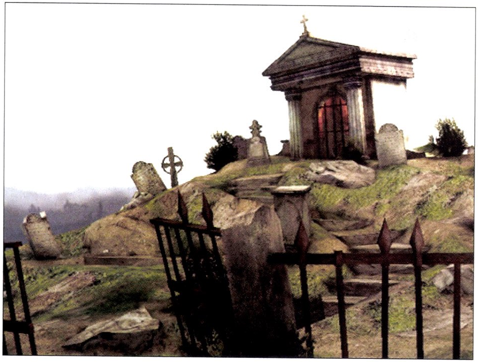
After you're done pleasing your performers, you can finally get into the slickest part of the game: actually making movies. After selecting a script and a cast, you create a flick by placing the actors in sets. From there, you string together scenes (from a menu of about 3,000, all of which you can customize) until you get yourself a picture—you can actually watch the finished product from beginning to end as well.

Shifting scenes around not enough for you? Lionhead is also toying with headset support for letting you dub in your own dialogue.

Publisher: Activision **Developer:** Lionhead **Release Date:** Fall







COMING SOON

The latest on what's coming out and when. (Just remember, no release date is ever final!)

MARCH

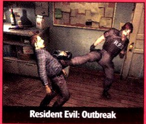
All-Star Baseball 2005	Acclaim	Baseball from the future
Backyard Baseball	Atari	Baseball for the young'uns
Crimson Sea 2	Koei	Like a sci-fi *Winback*
Cy Girls	Konami	Based on toys you never had
Drakengard	Square Enix	Second-rate *Dynasty Warriors*
ESPN Major League Baseball	Sega/ESPN	*World Series* no more
Fight Night 2004	EA Sports	Boxing to look forward to
Final Fantasy XI	Sony CEA	The best MMORPG ever?
Firefighter F.D.18	Konami	Fulfill your childhood fantasy
Funkmaster Flex's Hitz Factory	XS Games	Mix your own trackz
Gradius V	Konami	The best-looking 2D shooter ever?
Headhunter: Redemption	Sega	Jack Wade is back...with help
Ice Nine	BAM	Based on *The Recruit*...sort of
Lifeline	Konami	Voice-recognizing sci-fi action
Micro Mayhem	Jaleco	Micro Machines...that aren't
MLB 2005	Sony CEA	It's 2004 all season, Sony! OK?
MTX: Mototrax	Activision	Motocross gets a shot of O2
MVP Baseball 2004	EA Sports	The preseason favorite
Naval Ops: Commander	Koei	More seafaring strategy
Onimusha: Blade Warriors	Capcom	Samurai showdown
Rainbow Six 3	Ubisoft	Another good Clancy game?
Resident Evil: Outbreak	Capcom	Online survival-horror
Samurai Warriors	Koei	The dynasty moves to Japan
Seven Samurai 20XX	Sammy	Kurosawa...in the future!
Saturday Night Speedway	Atari	You can even play it on Friday
Scooby-Doo! Mystery Mayhem	THQ	Just in time for *Scooby-Doo 2*
The Suffering	Midway	Survival-horror meets *Oz*
Ten Pin Alley 2	XS Games	The bowling series' PS2 debut!
Trivial Pursuit Unhinged	Atari	With Whoopi Goldberg!
World Championship Pool	Jaleco	Didn't we review this months ago?
The X-Files: Resist or Serve	VUG	Scully and Mulder survive horror

APRIL

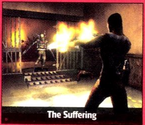
Alias	Acclaim	Because Jennifer Garner is hot
Destruction Derby Arenas	Gathering	Smash 'n' bash some hot cars
Hitman: Contracts	Eidos	Agent 47's greatest hits
NBA Ballers	Midway	One-on-one b-ball...with style
Serious Sam: Next Encounter	Global Star	Not-so-serious $20 online fragfest
Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	Sony CEA	The infection has been delayed

MAY

Bujingai: The Forsaken City	BAM	Martial-arts futuristic fantasy
Mega Man Anniversary Collection	Capcom	10 *Mega Man* games in one
Onimusha 3: Demon Siege	Capcom	The best one yet, most likely
Shrek 2: The Game	Activision	At least it's got a donkey
Transformers Armada: PTE	Atari	A good *Transformers* game?!



Resident Evil: Outbreak



The Suffering

JUNE

DRIV3R	Atari	Cool gam3, stupid nam3
The Fast and the Furious	VUG	Street racing with a license
MLB SlugFest Pro	Atari	Bless you!
Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy	Midway	Use mind powers to fight
Red Dead Revolver	Rockstar	Long live the Old West
Showdown: Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	More than 70 old schoolers
SNK vs. Capcom: SVC Chaos	SNK	Chaotic cross-company fighting
Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow	Ubisoft	Delayed until way after tomorrow
StarCraft: Ghost	Blizzard	Kind of like *Metal Gear*...in space!

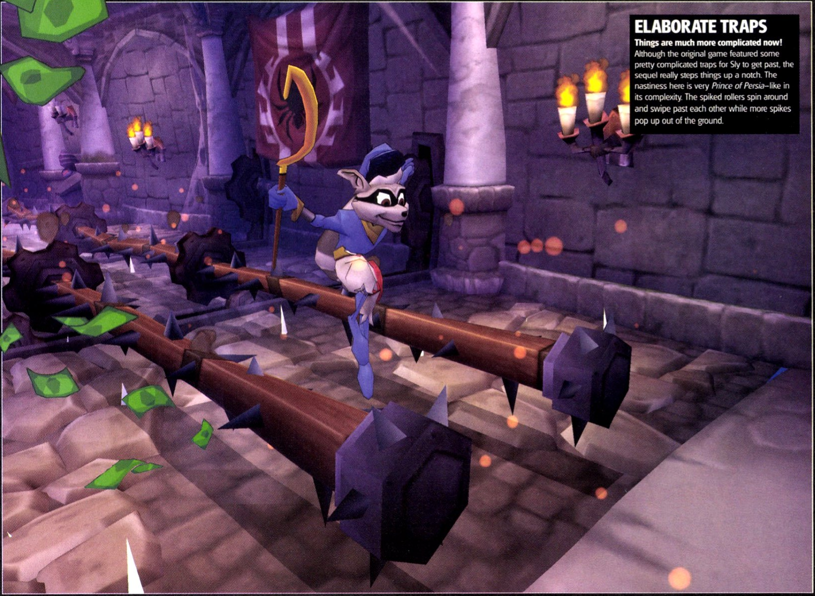
SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES

World exclusive first peek at the sequel to Sly Cooper

Band of Thieves

By John Davison

SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES



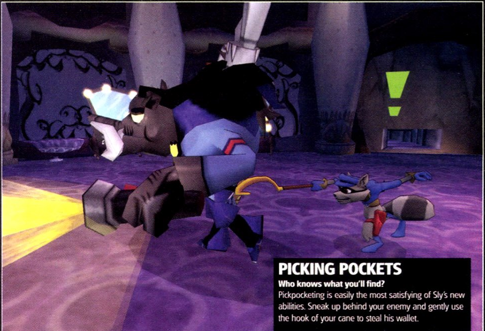
ELABORATE TRAPS

Things are much more complicated now!
Although the original game featured some pretty complicated traps for Sly to get past, the sequel really steps things up a notch. The nastiness here is very *Prince of Persia*–like in its complexity. The spiked rollers spin around and swipe past each other while more spikes pop up out of the ground.

Sucker Punch is, quite possibly, a studio you've never heard of. However, if you were one of the 200,000 people who bought *Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus* when it was re-released on the Greatest Hits label last year or one of the few hundred thousand who contributed to the game's success in 2002, you are familiar with its work. Chances are, you're a big fan too.

The studio itself is situated in a fairly unassuming brown-glass office building in Bellevue, just outside Seattle, and when we visit it on a cold morning in January, the area is living up to its reputation—it's raining miserably. Walking into Sucker Punch's suite on the third floor reveals a dark expanse of cubicles, and as we wander the hallways, we see enormous paintings of the environments from the company's games propped up against the walls. (These set pieces were apparently produced for a video interview that will eventually appear on our DVD prior to the game's release in the fall.) It's 10 a.m., and the place is deserted. "We came in early to meet with you," explains Brian Fleming, the producer of the new game. "Our guys aren't really morning people, but this is important. You're the first people outside of Sony to see the game, so we're a bit nervous."

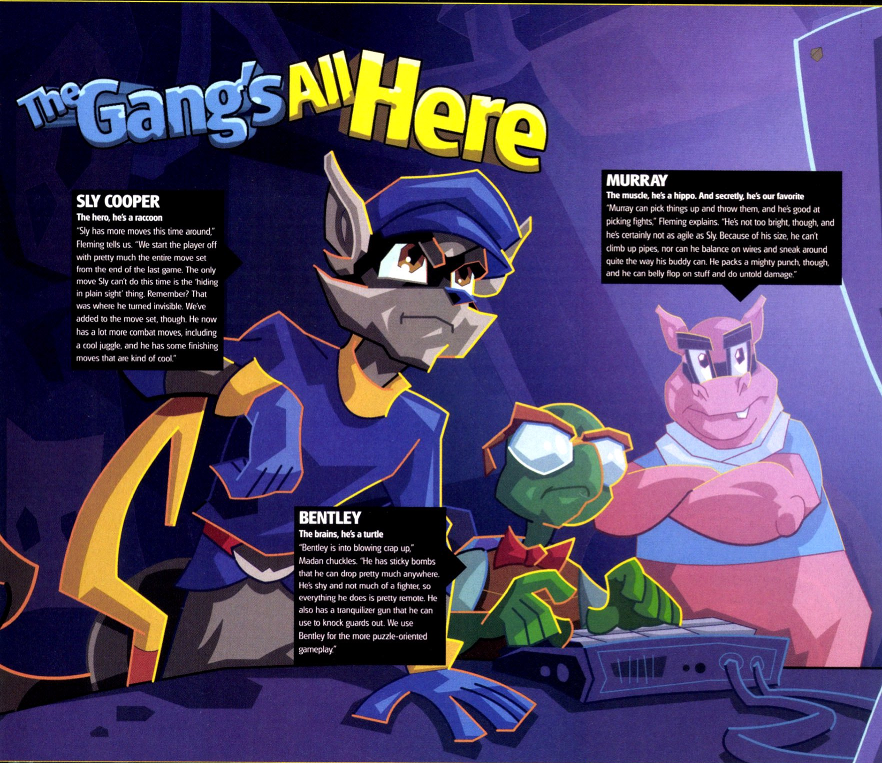
We're big fans of *Sly Cooper* here; it was one of the numerous pleasant surprises of 2002. Arriving at the same time as *Jak and Daxter* and *Ratchet & Clank*, in a lot of ways it outclassed the pair of them. It was a lighthearted, extremely enjoyable experience that stretched what we expect from platform games by integrating stealthy action and even *PaRappa*-style memory/rhythm gameplay into the mix. "We wanted more of everything this time," Fleming says. "We had the mantra



PICKING POCKETS

Who knows what you'll find?
Pickpocketing is easily the most satisfying of Sly's new abilities. Sneak up behind your enemy and gently use the hook of your cane to steal his wallet.

The Gang's All Here



SLY COOPER

The hero, he's a raccoon

"Sly has more moves this time around," Fleming tells us. "We start the player off with pretty much the entire move set from the end of the last game. The only move Sly can't do this time is the 'hiding in plain sight' thing. Remember? That was where he turned invisible. We've added to the move set, though. He now has a lot more combat moves, including a cool juggle, and he has some finishing moves that are kind of cool."

MURRAY

The muscle, he's a hippo. And secretly, he's our favorite

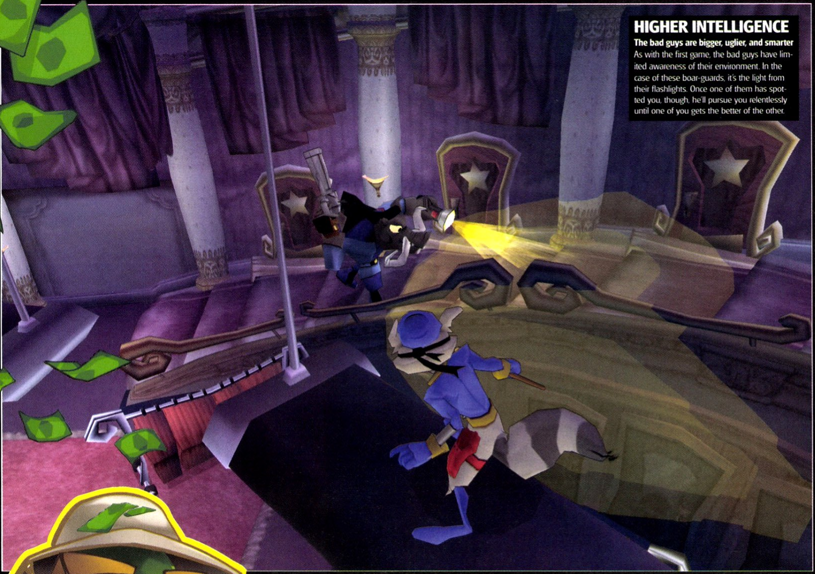
"Murray can pick things up and throw them, and he's good at picking fights," Fleming explains. "He's not too bright, though, and he's certainly not as agile as Sly. Because of his size, he can't climb up pipes, nor can he balance on wires and sneak around quite the way his buddy can. He packs a mighty punch, though, and he can belly flop on stuff and do untold damage."

BENTLEY

The brains, he's a turtle

"Bentley is into blowing crap up," Madan chuckles. "He has sticky bombs that he can drop pretty much anywhere. He's shy and not much of a fighter, so everything he does is pretty remote. He also has a tranquilizer gun that he can use to knock guards out. We use Bentley for the more puzzle-oriented gameplay."

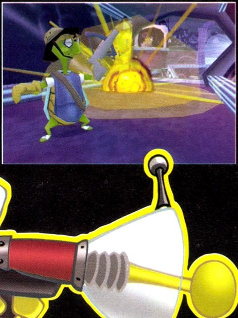
SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES



HIGHER INTELLIGENCE

The bad guys are bigger, uglier, and smarter

As with the first game, the bad guys have limited awareness of their environment. In the case of these boar-guards, it's the light from their flashlights. Once one of them has spotted you, though, he'll pursue you relentlessly until one of you gets the better of the other.



of 'times two' in mind for every aspect of the game. We got some criticism for the length of the first game, and this time, we're looking at about twice the length. We have bigger levels with more enemies and more to do."

Once the game has loaded, Sly is once again in Paris, just as he was at the beginning of *Thievius*. "When you pick up the story, Sly and the gang hear that after they had defeated Clockwerk at the end of the first game, Carmelita [Sly's nemesis/love interest] swooped in with her Interpol cronies and unearthed all the broken parts," explains Fleming. "She shipped them off to a warehouse in Paris, and now Sly is worried that this means Clockwerk could be put back together. Sly knows that Clockwerk was instrumental in the death of every member of his family, so he hatches a plan to break in to the warehouse and steal the remains from Interpol to prevent anyone from trying to put him back together.

"When he arrives at the facility, of course the remains have already been stolen, and of course Carmelita turns up and thinks that he's responsible," Fleming continues, as he shows us artwork of a new key player in the story. "Constable Neela is a new character. She has no history with the Cooper gang and immediately questions Carmelita's assumption that Sly is responsible."

What has actually happened, it turns out, is that a new group of criminals has liberated the various pieces of Clockwerk and is now using them for its own nefarious needs. After this brief introduction, which plays out prior to the credits [just like the Paris scene in the original game], Sly has to engage each of the new crime lords in turn.

YOU ASKED FOR IT...

"We got lots of requests from gamers saying that they wanted to be able to play in that Paris environment from the beginning of the first game," Dev Madan, the art director on the game, tells us. And what we are shown for the majority of our exclusive look at *Sly 2* is exactly what gamers asked for.

"The mission for this second game can be summed up in a single sentence," Fleming tells us as we start to jump around in the gorgeous Parisian environment, "and that is: 'Sly and the gang work together to pull off a series of big heists.' Each episode leads toward a big climax where they pull off a big job [see sidebar p. 95]. We really wanted to give the feel of classic heist movies, like *Ocean's Eleven* and *The Italian Job,* with this."

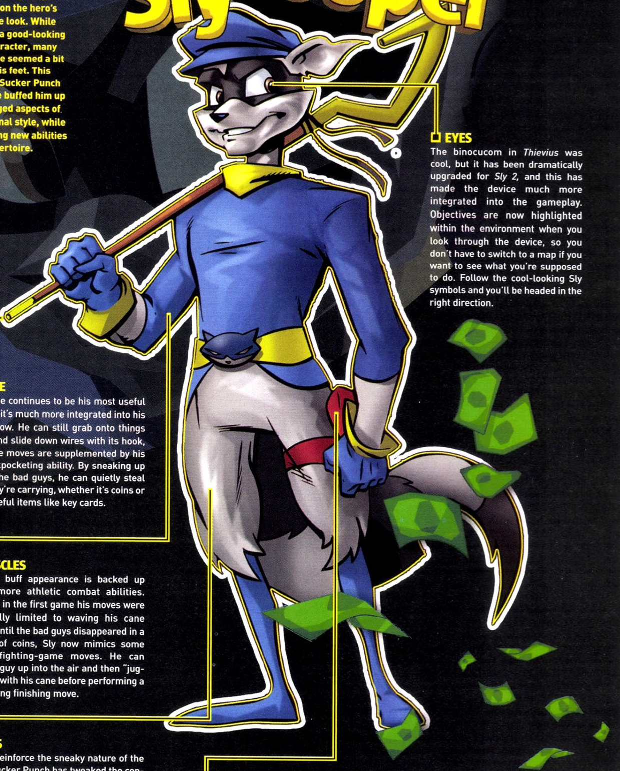
So what's happening in Paris? "Dimitri is the first criminal you have to go after," Madan explains. "He's a seedy underworld nightclub owner and art school dropout. He is in possession of Clockwerk's feathers and is using the technology to power a counterfeiting machine." Why counterfeiting? "He was making his way with his own particularly unique style," chuckles Madan, poking some fun at the expense of his art school experiences. "The public didn't respond too well to this, so now he's kinda punishing the world for its bad taste. He's stealing art and replacing it with counterfeit stuff that he's creating." So, it immediately becomes clear that the goal of the first chapter of the game is to outwit Dimitri and relieve him of his piece of Clockwerk.

"The first mission is broken down into three basic parts," Fleming tells us as he deftly guides Sly around the rooftops of Paris. "First, there's the reconnaissance element, where you need to watch Dimitri and tap into his network to find out what he's up to. Then there's the infiltration aspect, where you break in and snap photos of his operation. Finally, there's the heist itself." As Fleming explains, we get our first sighting of "lounge lizard" Dimitri as he wanders through the streets of Paris. "Something we wanted to do is really bring the bosses into the gameplay more. In the first *Sly,* you never really saw the bosses until the end of each chapter. This time, we've structured things so you see them earlier on, and you really get an idea of what you're up against." It's immediately apparent that Dimitri is a delightfully sleazy character who struts around the level while accompanied by atrocious nightclub music.

"In the first game, the environments were one of two things: They were either a tunnel or a maze," Development Director Chris Zimmerman explains as Fleming continues to work his way

Anatomy of Sly Cooper

Many comments about the original *Sly Cooper* centered on the hero's distinctive look. While certainly a good-looking game character, many thought he seemed a bit light on his feet. This time, the Sucker Punch guys have buffed him up and changed aspects of his personal style, while also adding new abilities to his repertoire.



☐ EYES

The binocucom in *Thievius* was cool, but it has been dramatically upgraded for *Sly 2,* and this has made the device much more integrated into the gameplay. Objectives are now highlighted within the environment when you look through the device, so you don't have to switch to a map if you want to see what you're supposed to do. Follow the cool-looking Sly symbols and you'll be headed in the right direction.

☐ CANE

Sly's cane continues to be his most useful tool, but it's much more integrated into his moves now. He can still grab onto things with it and slide down wires with its hook, but these moves are supplemented by his new pickpocketing ability. By sneaking up behind the bad guys, he can quietly steal what they're carrying, whether it's coins or more useful items like key cards.

☐ MUSCLES

His new buff appearance is backed up by his more athletic combat abilities. Whereas in the first game his moves were essentially limited to waving his cane around until the bad guys disappeared in a shower of coins, Sly now mimics some classic fighting-game moves. He can whack a guy up into the air and then "juggle" him with his cane before performing a devastating finishing move.

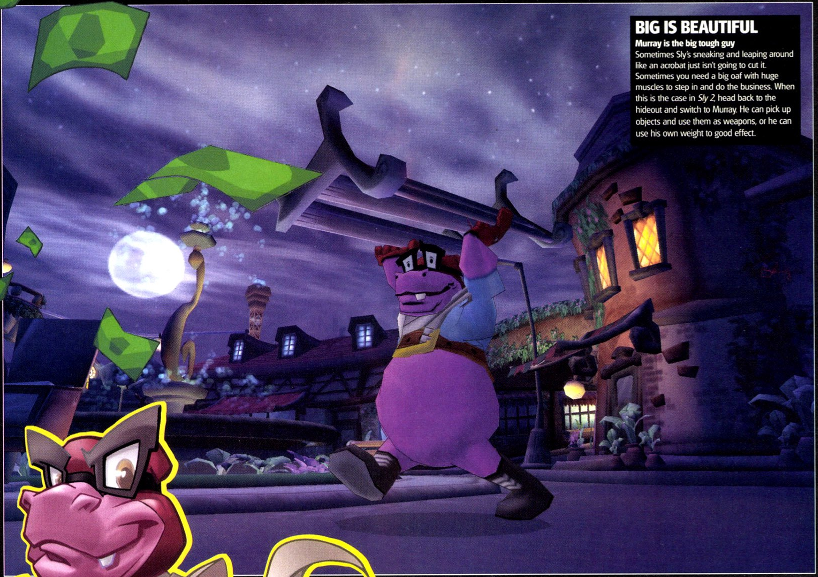
☐ LEGS

To help reinforce the sneaky nature of the game, Sucker Punch has tweaked the controls so that Sly is much sneakier. In the first game, pushing the left analog stick caused Sly to move from a creep to a sprint, but in *Sly 2,* the default range is much sneakier. You now have much more control over Sly's sneaking, and if you want to sprint through a level, you have to squeeze R2.

☐ POUCH ON PANTS

Some of the collection aspects of the first game have been toned down, and this is reflected in Sly's attire. He no longer sports a backpack, instead opting for a more contemporary pouch on his pants. The bottle collecting from *Thievius* is gone, as is the life-extending horseshoe collecting. Sly is now focused on collecting coins and interacting with more mission-sensitive objects, like Dimitri's art collection.

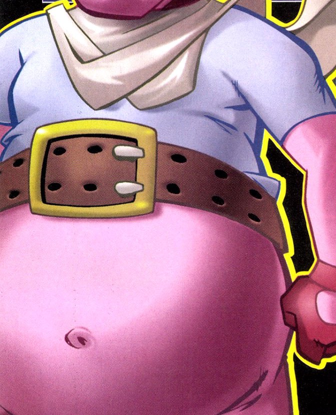
SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES

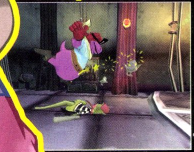


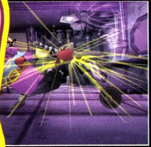
BIG IS BEAUTIFUL

Murray is the big tough guy

Sometimes Sly's sneaking and leaping around like an acrobat just isn't going to cut it. Sometimes you need a big oaf with huge muscles to step in and do the business. When this is the case in *Sly 2,* head back to the hideout and switch to Murray. He can pick up objects and use them as weapons, or he can use his own weight to good effect.







through the Paris environment. "In the new game, you can go pretty much anywhere you want. We wanted to emphasize the sense of freedom."

It's clear at this point that the structure of *Sly 2* is different from the first game. There is no map screen, and there's very little that takes you out of the game environment. "There are no 'hubs' this time," Fleming chips in. "The game environment for each episode is like a super-rich hub itself."

"When you're talking to game developers, if they don't say *Grand Theft Auto* influenced them, they're lying," states Zimmerman. "*GTA* changed everything, and while we're not saying we have something similar, we learned that the sense of freedom you can provide is a huge deal. *Sly 2* doesn't have a really huge game world, though. It's big but not enormous. We focused on it being open and dense. It has to be fun."

"People who don't have 11 hours at a time to play a game can just pick this up and play it," Fleming beams. "One of the reasons we loved *GTA* was because you could get a sense of achievement if you played for an hour or less. There are smaller goals that give you a sense of progress."

From watching the first episode unfold in front of us, it's clear that there's plenty to keep you occupied, not least of which is your interaction with the bad guys. "The guards are much more intelligent this time," Fleming explains. "So the combat is really important. In the original *Sly,* they had a zone of awareness that you could trigger, but you could get away from them. This time, they can roam freely around the environment, just like you, and they have full command of the environment, too," he explains as a nasty little rat guard chases Sly onto the top of a building. "They can pursue you pretty much anywhere, so there's much more pressure to be sneaky this time. There are no one-hit kills in this game. A full damage system is integrated into everything, so it really pays to work with the environment when you're fighting bad guys. It's better to try and knock them off a building or something rather than keep swiping at them."

"It's easy for us to make bad guys that can kill you," Zimmerman explains as Fleming cruises around the streets of Paris rounding up bad guys who will pick a huge street brawl with Sly. "It's hard to make bad guys who make you look good." The ensuing battle between Sly and his French rat pursuers does exactly that, though. They chase him around but fall victim to purposeful strikes from Sly's cane.

"We liked the enemies in the first game," Fleming tells us, "but your only interaction with them was hitting them with your cane. We really wanted to put you in close proximity with the bad guys this time, so we gave Sly a new ability that does this and also gives you something new that makes you feel like a thief." What is it? "Pickpocketing," he explains as he creeps up behind a guard and steals a key from his back pocket. "Getting the sense of being nimble and a thief is something we really wanted to provide," Fleming says as Sly creeps away from his target. "In the last game, that was probably our biggest failing. You never really got that sense of being able to improvise."

"Last time, we had this great stealth-action game," Fleming declares. "When you nail that kind of gameplay, it's like you have this great-tasting cereal. This time, we wanted to make it taste better. How do we do that? Do we sugar frost it? Do we honey dip it?"

The answer, it seems, is to really push things that make you feel like a thief. In many ways, it seems the team has tried to slow things down a little. "In the first game, we built these gorgeous environments," Madan tells us, "and then made you run through them as fast as you possibly could. This time, we want to show off how great everything looks. When you're sneaking around, you get to enjoy it a bit more. We wanted to get away from the usual platform-game idea of just jumping from rock to rock to turtle to hippo."

HOLE IN THE DOUGHNUT

"We found that we had a pretty broad appeal with the first game," Fleming says with some justifiable pride. "We were a hit with the 13-and-under crowd, for obvious reasons, and we were also a hit with people over 19. We just didn't get the high school kids. I understand that they just want to play *Grand Theft Auto*, so what can we do? Hopefully, the combat will help us appeal to the hole in our doughnut, those high school kids, but we'll see. We approached things like the old *Batman* show in the '60s, just like last time." Madan explains all of this as Fleming shows off some of Sly's new finishing moves, which are accompanied by appropriately *Batman*-like "thwack" exclamations on screen, supported by a blast from a horn section on the soundtrack. "It's layered in terms of content, so on the surface, you have the stuff the kids appreciate, but then underneath, you have the humor that the adults get. We have to embrace the fact that our hero is a cartoon raccoon."

The Big Heist

Described by the Sucker Punch team as "an overly elaborate plan," the big heist at the end of the game's first episode is a good example of the new way of thinking for *Sly 2*. Everything you do in Paris gears you up for this job, and you'll make use of all the information you've gathered before plunging headfirst into a series of events that makes Danny Ocean's plan to hit the Bellagio look like kid stuff.

Thanks to Sly's reconnaissance of the area, Bentley has surmised that Dimitri is hiding Clockwerk's feathers and the counterfeiting machine they power in a room hidden underneath the fountain in front of Dimitri's nightclub. In order to break into this room, the team has to work together to break through the fountain and into the hidden room.

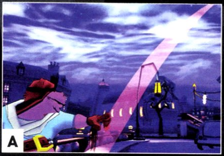
First, Murray and Bentley head to the fountain's pumping station so they can switch off the water supply. A: Murray throws Bentley through the window at the top of the tower, and the action then switches to Bentley working solo.

The pumping station is a puzzle room. Bentley has to figure out which valves to turn in order to divert the water from the fountain to the overflow drain. It's a fairly simple puzzle, but you'll have to work out the water's path before you start turning things.

Once Bentley is done, the guard in front of the nightclub notices that the water is no longer flowing and heads off to find the repair truck so the fountain can be fixed. B: The action switches to Sly, who has to sneak up behind the guard, steal the truck keys from his back pocket, and then knock him out.

C: At this point, Bentley and Murray have returned from the pumping station. D: While they steal the repair truck, Sly needs to climb up onto the huge sign above the nightclub's entrance. E: Once he's there, the action switches between Murray, who is manning a grappling hook on top of the truck, and Sly, F:, who needs to catch the hook with his cane and attach it to the huge sign. G: Once the hook is caught and attached, Sly jumps down to ground level and protects the repair truck from Dimitri's guards, who are now pouring out of the nightclub.

H: Eventually, the sign topples and smashes the fountain so that Sly can jump down into the chamber below, where he'll confront Dimitri.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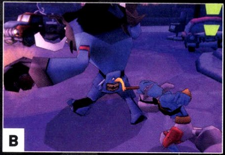
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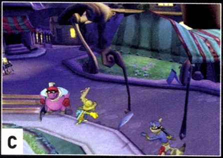
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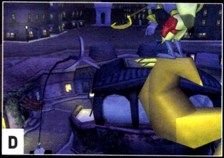
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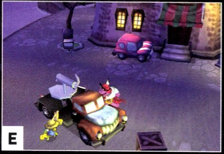
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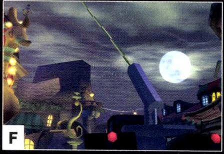
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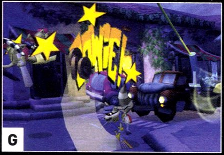
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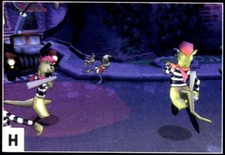
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REVIEWS

Making the world a more perfect place.

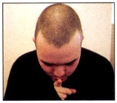
OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE GAME OF THE MONTH

BONDAGE

Neither shaken nor stirred

Everything or Nothing has proven to be everything we hoped for, with its mix of varied gameplay and pure Hollywood Bond-flick presentation. That's why it's our Game of the Month.

MEET THE CRITICS



JOHN DAVISON

No games to review for JD this month. If Dana would stop yelling at *Lifeline*, he could get some sleep.

Current Favorites: Sitting on his big fat ass

Favorite Genre: Anything

DANA JONGEWAARD

Thanks to all of her headset practice in *Lifeline*, Dana's contemplating a new career in telemarketing.

Current Favorite: *BG&E*

Favorite Genre: Anything with good slabs o' manmeat

JOE RYBICKI

With only one review, Joe spent the month drinking tequila and playing poker.

Current Favorites: *FFXI, MX Unleashed, ¡Americano!*

Favorite Genres: MMORPG, Adventure, Puzzle, Hold 'Em

CHRIS BAKER

After C-Bake slammed *Drakengard* last month, Squenix fanboys have ruthlessly summoned Bahamut on his ass!

Current Favorite: *Worms 3D*

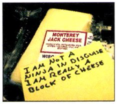
Favorite Genres: Action, Adventure, Strategy, Sports

THIERRY (SCOOTER) NGUYEN

Reviewing two *Romance* games within a year has transformed Scooter into a crazed Chinese warlord!

Current Favorites: *Bond: EON, SSX 3, POP*

Favorite Genre: Romance



GIANCARLO VARANINI

Giancarlo could tell you why he reviews ninja games, but then he'd have to kill you.

Current Favorites: *Champs o' Norrath, R-Type Final*

Favorite Genres: Action, Sports, Polar Bear Fighting

REVIEWS

PS2 GAMES

99	Cy Girls	★★½
98	Firefighter F.D.18	★★½
97	James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing	★★★★½
98	Lifeline	★★½
98	Mafia	★★★½
99	MX Unleashed	★★★★
100	Naval Ops: Commander	★★½
100	Nightshade	★★★½
102	Onimusha: Blade Warriors	★★½
100	Romance of the Three Kingdoms IX	★★★
102	Worms 3D	★★★½

CLARIFICATION

***Champions* is even better than we thought**

Last month, we criticized *Champions of Norrath* because "switching between the two discs proves as annoying as you'd imagine." However, between the time Sony Online Entertainment sent us reviewable code and when the game was published, the whole game was squeezed onto one DVD. Our score is still 4.5 stars, but we wanted to clarify the honest mistake.

SANCHO POCO

99 CYLICONE
MGS meets *Tenchu*
And Sancho meets St. Peter

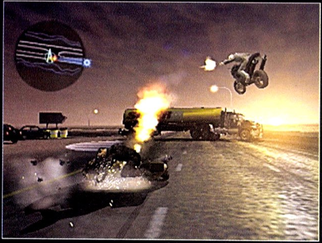
100 SHE-NOBI
Hibana vs. Hotsuma
Chalk one up for girl power

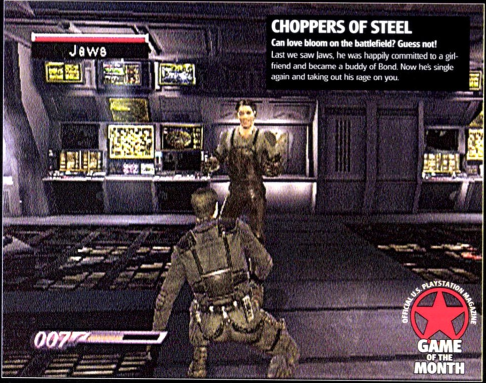
102 CUT LOOSE
Samanosuke vs. Jubei
Oni the strong survive

JAMES BOND 007:
EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

A Bond game with everything cool and nothing craptacular

Publisher: EA Games **Developer:** EA Redwood Shores **MSRP:** $49.99 **ESRB:** Teen





CHOPPERS OF STEEL

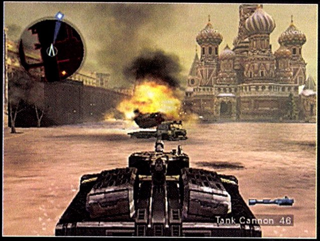
Can love bloom on the battlefield? Guess not!

Last we saw Jaws, he was happily committed to a girlfriend and became a buddy of Bond. Now he's single again and taking out his rage on you.

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE GAME OF THE MONTH

A lot has been said about *James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing*'s attempt at feeling like a genuine *Bond* movie. After witnessing the opening level (where Bond snags a suitcase nuke, shoots a bunch of guys, and takes out a harrier, to boot) followed by an honest-to-God *Bond* theme sung by Mya for the opening credits, I was inclined to make such an assessment. But after playing it, that doesn't quite give it enough credit. It feels as though EA somehow found the scripts to the next three *Bond* movies and combined them into an ultra-*Bond* movie that features cloaking cars, tanks, metal-handed dudes, three (not just the usual two) *femmes fatales*, the return of Jaws, and a deliciously malevolent Willem Dafoe. Besides making a fantastically epic and over-the-top ultra-*Bond* flick, EA snuck in a little something called "a fantastic game" into the mix as well.

EON, as a game, quite literally has everything in it. There's third-person brawling. There's stealth. There's driving (in fact, there's a stealth level featuring the car!). There's tank hijacking. There's even a sensual massage. Yet all of these elements surprisingly work. The combination of weapons, vehicle levels, usable items and environments, and the legions of baddies maintains the crescendo of perpetual and over-the-top carnage. Were it not for the stealth levels, I'd say *EON* shows off some of the purest action in gaming right now.



The shift to third person is good for immersion, since it visually just looks like you're watching Bond brawl. The production values are pretty fabulous—every major character sports both the voice and likeness of the actor, adding that extra layer of *Bond* authenticity to the game. The plot is some forgettable tale of diabolical scheming, doomsday devices, and attractive scientists. Like in the later *Bond* films, the plot serves the incredible stunts and action, not vice versa.

EON also strikes a beautiful balance between newbie and hardcore. There are just two buttons for melee combat, but hardcore players can learn to utilize the environment to pull off slick-looking hand-to-hand moves. You easily lock on to baddies with L1, but you can also use the right-analog stick to fine-tune your aim before pulling the R1 trigger. You can even turn on Bond sense, which freezes the game world and allows you to easily switch weapons or items, target an enemy, and then "unpause" to start shooting. Of course, if you don't want to use Bond's preternatural abilities, you're free to select items and target enemies the old-fashioned way.

Like in the later movies, there are a few notable flaws. A couple of times, in a very gamey fashion, enemies won't spawn into a room until Bond goes inside. Meaning that you can use a Q-spider to scout a room, think no one is there, and in "ha ha, fooled ya!" fashion, the baddies then spawn in the room. Also, some of the levels rely on pure trial and error, which is a silly and outdated design element, but these aren't too numerous.

EON's fusion of pure action, cinematic production values, and solid multiplayer all add up to one simple conclusion: This is the best *Bond* game on PS2.

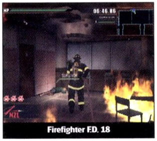
Thierry Nguyen

★★★★½

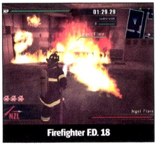
REVIEWS

Oh Sancho, we hardly knew ye.

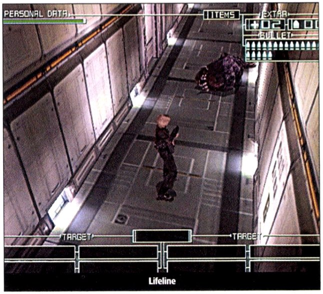
$79.95 The price of the *Star Trek* U.S.S. *Enterprise* voice-activated dimmer switch



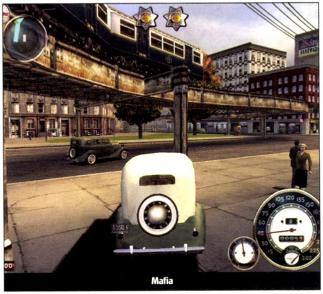
Firefighter F.D. 18



Firefighter F.D. 18



Lifeline



Mafia

FIREFIGHTER F.D. 18

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami Japan
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Teen

If you were worried about not having received the proper training to deal with fires, you can now heave a sigh of relief. *Firefighter F.D. 18,* "the most complete and realistic firefighting experience ever created for a videogame," is now available at a store near you.

As Dean, the noble protagonist, you battle your way through 15 levels of flame-combat exercises. Firefighting sequences are intercut with cheesy cinematics strung together into a melodramatic plot that pits Dean and his reporter sidekick against a mad arsonist.

Gameplay quickly gets repetitive. You wind your way through various burning environments, using your tools to subdue the fire enough to make it to the victims, who are "rescued" when you reach them—no further action is required on your part. Events in each room are very scripted; the backdraft that surprised you the first time you went into the storage room will happen at exactly the same place the next time, so the element of surprise quickly disappears.

The control scheme is ridiculously clumsy—to swap among inventory items, you need to hit Select, scroll to the new item and hit Square, then push Select again to return to the action. To do this once is awkward; to do this five or six times within a minute of play is tedious beyond belief. There are also clipping bugs that cause you to get stuck and require a restart. Aside from getting to tote around the world's longest hose for hours, this game is just not very fun.

Dana Jongewaard

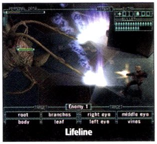
★★½

LIFELINE

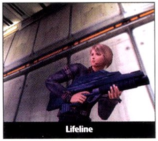
Publisher: Konami
Developer: Sony Japan
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Mature

When Konami announced it was bringing *Lifeline*, the popular Japanese voice-activated game, to the United States, we were excited to try it. After getting the preview build, the excitement lessened—there were still many bugs to be worked out. And now that we have the finished product? Well, read on.

The main character, Rio, is working as a waitress at a space hotel, which gets attacked. Chaos ensues, and Rio must try to figure out what happened and save herself. She can do so only with your help from your central location in the control room. You must direct Rio through the hotel using only verbal commands, fending off alien attackers along the way, and help her search for chips and secret words (the significance of these items isn't explained at first, so Lord knows how she can possibly know she needs them).



Lifeline



Lifeline

The main problem is that Rio recognizes more than 5,000 words, but you don't know what those words are. It's often hard to identify the object—if you see a stack of papers on a desk, is "report" the first word that's going to pop into your head? Also, your wording can cause her to stumble—I spent five minutes rephrasing one request before she finally figured it out.

When you're searching for items, Rio responds correctly about 65 percent of the time, but the system breaks down in combat situations with multiple enemies. Rio easily grows confused, and once she starts misinterpreting, it's impossible to get her back on track. A sample conversation:

Dana: Enemy number one.
Rio: Where?
Dana: Behind you!
Rio: Yes, I'll use a heal capsule! (Gets attacked by enemy.)
Dana: Get up! Number one.
Rio: Yes, number one. What should I do?!
Dana: Shoot head!
Rio: Where should I shoot?!
Dana: Head, shoot head!
Rio: Watch closely and guide me.
Dana: Shoot *head*!
Rio: OK, I'll run away. (Runs toward enemy; gets attacked.)
Dana: Shoot head, dumbass!
Dana's co-workers: Shut up!

It's frustrating to not just be able to whip Rio's gun away from her and do away with all of the monsters yourself.

The innovative concept is fun for a few minutes, but an entire game is tedious. This month's demo should give you all the exposure you'd ever want.

Dana Jongewaard

★★½

MAFIA

Publisher: Gathering
Developer: Illusion Softworks
MSRP: $49.99 **ESRB:** Mature

The tendency to dismiss *Mafia* as a *GTA*-clone with rickety cars is an understandable but mistaken one. Sure, both games have a big city in which players can hijack cars, but that's about it. A more accurate assessment would be that *Mafia* is a third-person shooter with *GTA* elements and some rickety cars. It also sports a great story, some clever mission design, and a craptacular programming job when it came to porting it from PC to console.

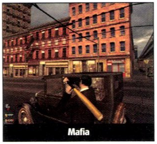
Mafia's gameplay boils down to "third-person run 'n' gun." The story focuses on Tommy Angelo and his life as mobster. Not only is the story itself genuinely interesting, it also helps wrap the gameplay around such imaginative missions as: Tommy picking up whiskey, Tommy sabotaging a racecar, Tommy escorting a girl home, Tommy destroying a hotel after killing the manager, Tommy pulling off a bank heist, and so forth. As such, because of the tightly integrated story, *Mafia*, like *The Getaway*, is a strictly linear affair. There's also a free-ride mode, which is similar to *GTA* in that you can run around, jack cars, and do side quests at random. There's also a console-exclusive race mode, but alas, the imaginative free-ride extreme mode from the PC isn't present.

It's disappointing, though, that such a fantastic game is saddled down with such a technically inept port. The ineptitude isn't in the graphics—yes, they are dated, but they're not absolutely horrid (though I may have a higher tolerance for datedness than you). No, it lies in the loading time. Basically, you'll spend at least a third of your playtime watching the load screen. And that's not just in between missions, you also have to wait for it to load distinct districts within the city—this becomes a problem when you cross something like three districts in the course of a mission. Also, the controls could use a bit more tuning (even with the "auto aim," it's hard to get a bead on anyone), and the hit detection is wacky—I would line up my reticle and fire, only to see my bullets whiz past the other mobster.

It's somewhat frustrating that what was a pretty great PC game is now a great game buried underneath vast technological annoyances. If the control, graphics, and load issues sound annoying to you, then you'll probably want to refuse this offer.

Thierry Nguyen

★★★½

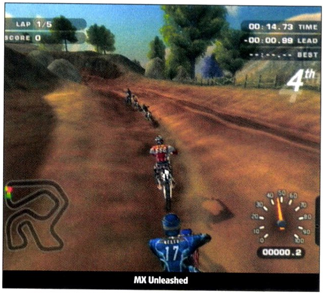


Mafia

Mafia

VEHICULAR MANSLAUGHTER
In *MX Unleashed*, you can race against a helicopter, and if you run into its blades with your bike, you can shear them all off!

www.coasttocoastcollectibles.com
If you want Cy Girls dolls (or, say, Barbie and Ken as Arwen and Aragorn), then check out this crazy site.



MX Unleashed

MX UNLEASHED

Publisher: THQ
Developer: Rainbow Studios
MSRP: $29.99 **ESRB:** Everyone

See that shot down there, the one that makes it look like the player's flying a plane?

The player's flying a plane.

This is by far the coolest feature of *MX Unleashed*: In the freestyle levels you can race against some other crazy vehicle and win the right to drive that vehicle. You can get yourself a monster truck, a dune buggy, a trophy truck (think *Smuggler's Run*), this biplane, and even a helicopter.

The rest of the game is pretty much what you'd expect from a motocross racer designed by the people who brought you *ATV Offroad Fury*. Beyond the aforementioned freestyle mode, there isn't much new ground broken here.

The freestyle mode is certainly neat, though. Similar to the cross-country racing of the *ATV* games, freestyle lets you range far afield in an enormous environment. This time, though, the challenges are more mission-based: Different areas have different goals, from precision jumping to stunt riding. You can ride around for kicks if you so desire, or you can hit a mission point and take on a challenge.

It's a nice new approach for the genre, and the addition of those wacky new vehicles makes things especially interesting—although you can't really do much with them except drive (or fly) around and look at the scenery.

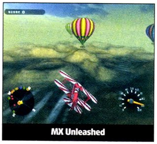
All in all, though, I'm a little disappointed with the level design. There have been some real shining moments in Rainbow's previous racers, but in *MX Unleashed* they're pretty few and far between. That's not to say the level design is poor, not by any means—it just seems a bit less imaginative than I've come to expect from Rainbow.

My other gripe is something that plagued both the *ATV* titles, and I'm a little miffed that it still hasn't been fixed: There are still times where you'll barely drift off course and immediately head back onto the track, but the game will think you're trying to cheat and reset you to the point where you first drifted off. This is unbearably frustrating, especially when you have only a narrow lead due to the game's irritating rubber-band catch-up feature.

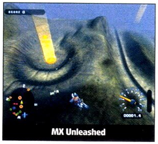
Still, there's a *lot* of gameplay to be had here, making it easy to find something else to do if your current goal proves too frustrating. And the physics make the game so entertaining that you really won't mind having to replay a race over and over and over.

Joe Rybicki

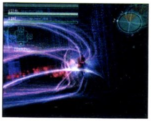
★★★★

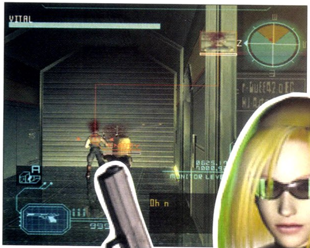


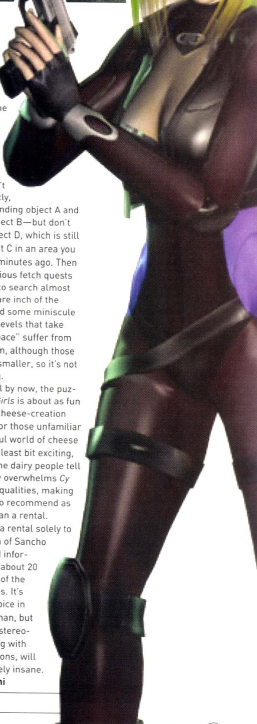
MX Unleashed



MX Unleashed







CY GIRLS

More like Sigh Girls

Publisher: Konami
Developer: Konami Japan
MSRP: $39.99 **ESRB:** Mature

On paper, a game like *Cy Girls* seems like a surefire hit. Who wouldn't want to experience a game that combines the gunplay of Konami's own *Metal Gear Solid* series with the stealthy exploits of Activision's *Tenchu* games? *Cy Girls* uses this formula by incorporating two playable characters—Ice and Aska—who utilize the *MGS* and *Tenchu* gameplay mechanics, respectively.

Despite the initial adjustment to the somewhat sluggish controls, it works pretty well. Playing as Ice, you can take cover behind a wall, only to pop up and pump some guard full of lead with some dual pistol action. She can also leap to the ground and fire while on her belly or her back. Likewise, Aska can perform the equivalent of stealth kills—only there's no stealth really required. Just run up to an enemy and slash with her sword at the right moment, and she executes a special attack that can take out numerous foes at once. Better yet, throw her grappling hook at an enemy and bring him closer just before giving the ol' chop to the face. Each character also has a unique set of inventory items, so Ice has access to an array of guns while Aska relies on a variety of throwing stars to do her long-range dirty work.

There's no question that when the action's intense, *Cy Girls* can be a really fun game, but at some point the developers thought it'd be a really good idea to throw in fetch quests to mess it up.

We're not talking about the "door is locked, so you need to find the key" fetch quest, but rather layer upon layer of incredibly inane tasks that are required to solve one simple problem. Worst of all, many of these tasks aren't even clever. Mostly, they just entail finding object A and putting it into object B—but don't forget to find object D, which is still attached to object C in an area you visited about 15 minutes ago. Then there are the tedious fetch quests that require you to search almost every single square inch of the entire level to find some miniscule object. Even the levels that take place in "cyberspace" suffer from the same problem, although those levels are much smaller, so it's not quite as irritating.

If you can't tell by now, the puzzle aspect of *Cy Girls* is about as fun as watching the cheese-creation process, which (for those unfamiliar with the wonderful world of cheese making) isn't the least bit exciting, no matter what the dairy people tell you. It completely overwhelms *Cy Girls'* redeeming qualities, making it really difficult to recommend as anything more than a rental.

And it's worth a rental solely to witness the death of Sancho Poco, Ice's rotund informant, who's shot about 20 times during one of the game's cut-scenes. It's sort of sick to rejoice in the death of the man, but his irritating and stereotypical voice, along with his shoddy directions, will drive you absolutely insane.

Giancarlo Varanini

★★½

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